

Netanyahu admits Israelis detained in Cyprus are Mossad agents

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu officially acknowledged Wednesday for the first time that two Israelis arrested in Cyprus this month were Mossad agents, public television said. Netanyahu told Cypriot ambassador Euripides Evriviades that the detained men had been acting in the name of the Israeli intelligence agency. But he stressed that the pair were not acting against Cyprus on behalf of Turkey, which occupied the eastern Mediterranean country's northern third in 1974. The television provided no further details. At Larnaca, Cyprus, district court judge remanded the two men, identified as Udi Argov, 37, and Igal Damari, 49, in custody for another five days Sunday on suspicion of spying on the Cypriot military.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
 جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

Sharon to visit next week

AMMAN (J.T.) — Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs Ariel Sharon is expected to visit Jordan next week heading a high-level economic delegation, an official source told the Jordan Times. Sharon, who will be accompanied by Israeli Minister of Trade and Industry Natan Sharansky and some other economic and finance officials, are expected to discuss with their Jordanian counterparts several bilateral issues and means to strengthen economic relations between the two countries, the official said. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, also said that trade and economic relations between Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority will be on the agenda.

Volume 24 Number 6999

AMMAN THURSDAY-FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19-20, 1998, RAJAB 30-SHA'BAN 1, 1419

Price: Jordan 200 fils

Germany cancels Jordan's debts

Debts 'to be swapped into development projects'

By Francesca Ciriaci

AMMAN — Germany has decided to cancel all of Jordan's debt under a JD21.3 million debt-swap, German State Minister for Foreign Affairs Ludger Volmar announced Wednesday. The German government on Friday made a formal decision to cancel Jordan's DM50 million debt, to be swapped into development projects the details of which will be discussed between the two governments, Volmar said at a press conference with German President Roman Herzog. "This cancels all current liabilities, so there will be no debt any more," said Volmar. The decision was prompted by the fact that the peace dividends we all had hoped for have not materialised," he added. Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994, but recurrent impediments to the achievement of a

comprehensive peace, and a 19-month deadlock on the Palestinian-Israeli track broken only last month, have frustrated most Jordanians. "The amount of debt swapped may be subject to debt conversions for the benefit of environment protection, preservation, and poverty alleviation projects," according to a press statement issued by the German government. "Half the cancelled debt must be spent in local currency on projects in these sectors," the statement added. With the recent decision, a total of DM169.5 million in debt-swaps have been granted to Jordan. The Kingdom is the largest per capita recipient of German aid. Since the early 1960s, the state-run German Development Bank has committed \$750 million to Jordan, a third of which is involved in ongoing projects. Germany's aid to Jordan

has taken many forms over the years, including technical assistance, development programmes, direct financial aid, soft loans — totalling DM300 million — and debt-swaps. The "unique ties of warm friendship" between the two countries were hailed by President Herzog. "Jordan is of the utmost importance because of its crucial stabilising role in the region," Herzog told reporters, underlying His Majesty King Hussein's decisive intervention in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations which led to the signing of the Oct. 23 Wye River memorandum. The German president said Jordan will also play a crucial role in ensuring the implementation of the deal, which entails a long overdue Israeli redeployment from 13 per cent of the West Bank in exchange for Palestinian security guarantees. Herzog, whose country

will assume the six-month rotating presidency of the EU in January, reiterated that the Europeans do not intend to challenge the leading American military and political role in the Middle East. "It would not make any sense to enter into competition [with the U.S.]," he told reporters, adding that Europe intends to help regional development through economic assistance and educational and training programmes. Herzog arrived in Amman on Tuesday on the third leg of a Mideast tour which included Israel and the Palestinian self-rule areas. Jordanians gave the German president, his wife and their accompanying delegation, a warm welcome, with banners hailing their visit in different parts of the city. Herzog is scheduled to leave today after visits to the archaeological and tourist sites of Petra and Aqaba.



A woman serves German President Roman Herzog Arabian coffee as HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, looks on. Prince Hassan and Herzog on Wednesday inaugurated a JD45 million wastewater treatment plant at Wadi Al Arab, in the northern governorate of Irbid (photo by Boghos).

Prince Hassan, Herzog inaugurate JD45m wastewater treatment plant

By Francesca Ciriaci

AMMAN — HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and German President Roman Herzog on Wednesday inaugurated a JD45 million wastewater treatment plant at Wadi Al Arab, in the northern governorate of Irbid. The plant, which includes a sewage collection and treatment system, will protect drinking water wells in the greater Irbid area, home to around 360,000 people. It was designed to help alleviate the country's chronic water deficit, with treated water channelled into the Jordan Valley and reused for irrigation purposes. Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Prince Hassan described the project, 74 per cent of which was financed by the German government, as "a contribution to peace-making."

The Crown Prince hailed the long-standing ties of cooperation between the two countries and the role played by the state-run German Development Bank in the development of the Kingdom, especially through projects in the Jordan Rift Val-

ley and the southern region of Aqaba. Prince Hassan also stressed that management of natural and human resources is one of the keys to development and reiterated Jordan's call for a regional water policy. Herzog said water, which historically has been at the core of regional crises, could become, through cooperation, a factor of stability in the Middle East. In his remarks at the inauguration ceremony, Water Minister Hani Mulki expressed Jordan's appreciation for the "generous contributions that the Federal Republic of Germany has made over the years to Jordan."

The Wadi Al Arab wastewater project, commissioned by the Water Authority, began in 1992, with the conclusion of a feasibility study. Construction of the treatment plant was carried out from 1996-1998, while work on the trunk sewers and the network, started in 1996, is still ongoing. "While access to safe drinking water has been impressive, reaching over 98 per cent of the population in 1998, the issue of securing a reliable supply of

water, adequate in quantity and appropriate in quality, is still one of the challenges facing Jordan today," Mulki said. The Kingdom is only now recovering from a water contamination crisis which dried up domestic taps in western Amman for two months this summer. Jordan's water deficit, currently at 220 million cubic metres per year (MCM/Y), will reach an estimated 250 MCM/Y by 2010. "One possible way to bridge this gap is through the proper utilisation of non-conventional water resources, brackish and saline waters, as well as the reduction of unaccounted waters in major urban areas," Mulki said. Later, at a reception hosted by the German president and his wife in honour of the Crown Prince and HRH Princess Sarvath, Prince Hassan expressed pride in the "close ties of cooperation and warm friendship that have steadily grown over the past 40 years" between Jordan and Germany. Prince Hassan noted that Jordanian-German relations are based on shared values and

common objectives. Stressing the importance of intercultural dialogue as a means to achieve "a reconciliation of civilisations," Prince Hassan called for the establishment of regional and global ethics. Recalling the "crucial support provided by Germany during the critical period of the Gulf War in 1991," the Crown Prince expressed Jordan's relief that conflict was averted during the latest Iraqi crisis. President Herzog praised Jordan's many achievements, and said his country is determined to boost cooperation even further, especially to enhance the role of civic society institutions, develop the water sector and strengthen economic ties. President Herzog, his wife and their accompanying delegation were scheduled to conclude their three-day visit to the Kingdom on Thursday. Mrs. Herzog on Wednesday toured facilities at the Baqa'a refugee camp and visited several local NGOs. Also on Wednesday, Herzog received an honorary doctorate from the Jordan University for Science and Technology in Irbid.

Israel readies West Bank withdrawal

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel finalised preparations Wednesday for the first phase of West Bank withdrawals required by the Wye River peace accord, but Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was holding back a final green light for the pull-back until the last minute. "Israel is due by this weekend to transfer to the Palestinians full or partial control over zones situated near the already autonomous towns of Jenin and Nablus in the north of the West Bank, military officials said. But Netanyahu has said the transfers will only be ordered if his cabinet determines during a meeting scheduled for Thursday morning that the Palesti-

ans have met their obligations under the Wye River agreement. At this stage of implementation of the accord, which is to come into effect over 12 weeks and in three stages, the Palestinians must notably issue a decree outlawing anti-Israeli incitement and adopt a framework law allowing the confiscation of illegal weapons. Israel also wants proof that the Palestinians have arrested 10 out of 30 men accused of anti-Israeli violence and who must be jailed over the 12-week period. "If these conditions are met, the army can redeploy on Thursday or Friday," said David Bar Ilan, Netanyahu's

spokesman. Palestinian officials said all their commitments would be met by the end of the week as required under the Wye accord. "We have no problem with fulfilling our commitments," said Nabil Abu Rudeina, Palestinian National Authority (PNA) President Yasser Arafat's spokesman. Palestinian sources said the incitement and weapons confiscation decrees had to be approved by Arafat's cabinet, which meets on Friday. Israeli officials said the land transfer itself would take only a couple of hours and involve primarily a handshake and exchange of maps between

Israeli and Palestinian security officials. "The only change on the ground will be the posting of some 500 road signs showing the new borders of areas under partial or full Palestinian control. "The redeployment involves no logistical problems because the territories to be turned over are empty," Bar Ilan said. Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon was expected to present the maps showing which areas will be transferred in the first phase to Mahmoud Abbas, the top deputy to Arafat, at a meeting Wednesday afternoon.

(Continued on page 12)

Weapons inspectors resume work in Iraq

BAGHDAD (AFP) — U.N. weapons inspectors resumed their field work Wednesday following renewed Iraqi assurances of full cooperation as the United States and Britain remained sceptical about Baghdad's sincerity. The United States stepped up its pressure on Iraq by warning there would be no immediate softening of sanctions even with full cooperation with the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) for Iraqi disarmament. As the last six weapons inspectors returned to Baghdad from Bahrain, UNSCOM spokeswoman Caroline Cross said "the Baghdad monitoring and verification centre has resumed its work and some of our staff are going on inspections." But she declined to give any more details on Wednesday's inspections and asked if there would be surprise visits, she said "we never know." As the inspectors resumed their work Iraq reiterated its commitment to full cooperation, but warned there were limits to how many "provocations" it could stomach. Presidential advisor General Amir Al Saadi on Tuesday said Baghdad would cooperate but "naturally, there are limits" and further crises would only be averted if the arms inspectors avoided provocations. The Babel newspaper, run by the eldest son of Iraqi

President Saddam Hussein, Uday, said the inspectors' indefinite presence in Iraq was a provocation in itself. "Until when will the inspectors, who are implicated in spying and sabotage, continue to act ruthlessly in our country?" the daily asked. More than 80 arms experts with UNSCOM, responsible for ensuring the destruction of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles, arrived in Baghdad on Tuesday and Wednesday after flying in from their rear base in Bahrain. Their return follows their abrupt evacuation last week amid fears of U.S. and British air strikes to punish Baghdad for its refusal to cooperate with UNSCOM. But even as the inspectors resumed their work on the strength of Iraq's assurances, Britain and the United States remained sceptical. British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook on Wednesday said: "Haven't we been here before? This was not the first time that Saddam had taken us to the brink. It will certainly not be the last." "He believes that, if he keeps marching us to the top of the hill and down again, eventually we will grow weary and stop marching," Cook said, writing in The Daily Telegraph.

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Turkey-Italy row over Ocalan escalates

ANKARA (R) — The row over the fate of a Kurdish guerrilla chief arrested in Rome intensified on Wednesday, Italy dismissing a warning by Turkey it would be an accomplice to mass murder unless it extradited him. Guerrilla leader Abdullah Ocalan, who has spearheaded a 14-year separatist guerrilla war in southeast Turkey, urged Italy not to bow to Turkish pressure but to grant him political asylum. He was arrested at a Rome airport last week. Speaking to parliament in Ankara, Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz said Ocalan's presence in Rome had put Italy's commitment to justice on trial and demanded extradition. "If they do not pass this test,

not only will it remain as a stain on their record but they will also become accomplices to every murder ever committed by the PKK (Kurdish Labour Party)," he said. "No government of the Turkish Republic would ever forget this," Yilmaz said to loud applause from political enemies and allies alike. In Rome, Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema rejected Yilmaz's comments. "Italy does not justify terrorism and does not intend in any way to be an accomplice," he said. He added that putting the words "Italy" and "accomplice to terrorism" in the same breath was "an unacceptable linkage."

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Parliament meets Sunday in 'formality session' to discuss King's absence

AMMAN (J.T.) — Parliament will meet briefly on Sunday for a "formality session" to discuss His Majesty King Hussein's absence from the country for over four months in line with the Constitution, officials said on Wednesday. The session, first set for Thursday, was postponed until Sunday to allow Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh to attend. Tarawneh left for the United States earlier this week to meet King Hussein, set to start the sixth and last round of chemotherapy. He has been at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota since July 14th undergoing medical treatment for lymphatic cancer. Article 28 of the Constitution stipulates that "if the King is away from the country for more than four months and Parliament is in recess, it should be summoned for a ses-

sion to examine the situation." Deputies said the meeting will only be a formality since the reason behind the King's absence is known. During the session, which will be chaired by Senate Speaker Zeid Rifa'i, Tarawneh is expected to address the assembly outlining the reason for the King's absence and updating members of the Upper and Lower Houses on the Monarch's health. King Hussein told citizens on Friday that his cancer treatment has been successful. Officials expect him to return home in the last 10 days of December. The session, expected to last for a few hours, marks the first time three extraordinary sessions are held consecutively.

Sri Lankan embassy to sue Jordanian employer after maid hospitalised

By Rana Hussein and Amy Henderson

AMMAN — The embassy of Sri Lanka yesterday said it will press charges against a Jordanian employer of a domestic worker admitted Tuesday to Al Bashir Hospital after she apparently suffered prolonged abuse and severe malnutrition, embassy officials said yesterday. Subramaniam Kanagarani, 21, was admitted to the hospital after her employer dumped her on her "agent's" lawn after complaining to the agent that the woman "was sick" and asking the agent to seek medical

attention for the woman, said embassy officials who contacted the Jordan Times yesterday. "The agent contacted the embassy immediately and we picked her up from the agent's home, where we found her in a state of absolute shock," said one official. The official said that the woman has either been unable or unwilling to speak since she was recovered from the agent's home, and therefore, both the embassy and hospital doctors have had difficulty identifying the cause of numerous abrasions on most of the woman's body, including her face. They also do not

know the last time the woman was allowed food, nor can they accurately account for unusual swelling of the woman's hands and feet. Doctors at Al Bashir, citing doctor-patient confidentiality, said they were not at liberty to discuss the woman's health, however, the embassy officials said that doctors had indicated to them that the woman had suffered severe neglect and malnutrition. At the hospital, embassy officials attempted to interview the woman in the presence of the Jordan Times, but she seemed unable to recognise her native tongue. The skin around

both eyes was blackened and the whites of the eyes bloody, and appeared substantially underweight. The official said the embassy had "blacklisted" the family of the employer for nearly a year, meaning that it would not allow a Sri Lankan coming to Jordan through official channels to work for that particular family. The embassy has had many complaints against this particular family from Sri Lankan domestic helpers, and there are now five cases raised against them by the immigration department for failing to pay workers their salaries, for failing to pay

for their work permits and over-stays, and are known to have abandoned "sick" women at their agents' offices," one official said. "We believe that they use an [alias] to continue getting domestic help from Sri Lanka." During an interview with the Jordan Times last month, Sri Lankan Ambassador Rajalingam said that the embassy — established in response to Sri Lankan charges that Jordanian officials manning the Sri Lankan consulate were trafficking Sri Lankan babies in a case known

(Continued on page 12)

British PM says opposition to Saddam Hussein is growing

WASHINGTON (AFP) — British Prime Minister Tony Blair, in an interview published Wednesday by The New York Times, said there was growing opposition in Iraq to President Saddam Hussein.

"I don't want to go into the detail of that too much," Blair said. "But there is a build-up of concern within Iraq over the incredible damage [Saddam Hussein] is doing to his own country."

"Now he may try to explain what has happened over the weekend... as a wonderful victory, but our assessment is that the claims against him are only increasing."

Blair said he fully supported U.S. President Bill Clinton's decision Saturday to call off the planned air strikes against Iraq and rejected the view that the episode had boosted Saddam's position enormously.

"What the weekend proved is that the thesis is complete nonsense," he said. "This is a dictator who, when he saw we really were prepared to take action, completely crumpled."

"Now no one can seriously think in terms of the stream of clarifications — written and oral — that [Iraqis] were giving that they were anything other than pretty desperate not to be attacked," he said the incident over the weekend provided a valuable lesson for the future: That the United States and Britain were determined to carry out an attack against Iraq.

"There were people, even on our own side, who were asking, 'Do you really intend to carry this thing through?'" Blair said.

"Well, I don't think there can be any doubt about that anymore."

Blair dismissed analyses that placed the United States and Britain in the same position as after the last confrontation with Iraq earlier this year.

"In February when the memorandum of understanding [between Iraq and the United Nations] was entered into, there had been a build-up over a period of months," he said. "This time there was really only two weeks between Oct. 30 and the decision to use force."

"Next time there won't be any negotiation at all — there will just be action," Blair warned.

The British premier was sceptical of charges that France might have tipped Saddam off to the timing of the attacks. "The thought is there on paper, so obviously I have read it," he said. "I simply don't know if that is the case, and I hope it's not the case. I mean I can't believe that any country close to us would do such a thing."

Britain to host meeting of 15 opposition groups

LONDON (R) — Britain is to convene a meeting of around 15 Iraqi opposition groups next Monday to urge them to settle their differences and work together to restore democracy to their country, a senior official said on Wednesday.

But he said that for the time being there would be no question of British banding over large sums of money or any weapons to the groups opposed to Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

Prime Minister Tony Blair said on Monday that Britain would work together with the United States to strengthen the deeply divided exiled Iraqi opposition groups and improve the chances of removing Saddam altogether.

The British official said the meeting between the groups and junior foreign minister Derek Fatchett had originally been set for Dec. 1 but was brought forward after the latest crisis with Baghdad over United Nations weapons inspectors.

"This meeting isn't intended to press the groups to choose a leader. We will encourage them to form a common vision of a future democratic Iraq," the official told reporters.

"There is not at this stage any question of supplying large amounts of money or any weapons. It's a question of political support," he added.

U.S. President Bill Clinton last month signed the Iraq Liberation Act which permits Washington to spend almost \$100 million on military aid for Hussein's democratic foes.

The groups which have been invited to attend include the mainstream Iraqi National Accord and the Iraqi National Congress as well as a host of smaller groups.

"The fact that representatives of 15 opposition groups have been invited to the meeting shows how fragmented they are," the official conceded.

"It obviously isn't going to be an instantaneous process to get rather a large group of diverse individuals to suddenly form a united front. But it's still a process worth trying and we'll see how far we get," the official said.

"Let's see if the recent events in Iraq can encourage them to work together more," he added, saying Britain's primary objective was still to ensure Saddam complied with U.N. Security Council resolutions on scrapping weapons of mass destruction.



TURKISH NATIONALISTS PROTEST AGAINST ITALY: Several women belonging to the Turkish Nationalist Party (CHP), also known as the 'Grey Wolves,' Wednesday shout anti-Italian and anti-PKK slogans in front of the Italian Consulate in downtown Istanbul. There have been demonstrations three days in a row at the Italian Consulate, although so far there has been no violence against Italians or Italian property in Turkey, since the arrest of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in Italy last week (AFP photo)

Israel, Lebanon in dispute over shrine

BEIRUT (AFP) — Israeli claims that a disputed mausoleum in southern Lebanon is the burial site of one of the 12 sons of the biblical prophet Jacob has ignited a controversy with Lebanese authorities.

"Israeli allegations are utter lies and this is not an innocent action," said Sheikh Mohammad Salim Jalal Al Din, the Sunni Muslim mufti of southern Lebanon.

"We have documents proving that the shrine belongs to the Waqf or Lebanon's religious endowment authority," he said, quoted in Beirut newspapers.

Officials at the British embassy here confirmed press reports that Israel asked Britain's Foreign Office to investigate the site, which Israelis claim is the burial site of Zevulun, one of the 12 sons of Jacob and his wife Leah.

But the Waqf said the shrine is the grave of a Muslim cleric, Saidun Ben Yacoub and that they have deeds dating back to the Ottoman Empire to prove its ownership of the domed, one-room mausoleum in the ancient port city of Sidon in southern Lebanon.

The shrine bears no construction date but is etched with inscriptions in Hebrew as well as verses from the Koran.

"I have called in the past and I renew my call now for the Lebanese government to confiscate the property of Lebanese Jews who hold Israeli citizenship," Jalal Al Din said.

"Israel has confiscated the property of the Lebanese in occupied Palestine and we should treat them likewise," he added.

The domed site was renovated after suffering damage during Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon.

'Sudan rebels join Ugandans in Congo war'

KINSHASA (R) — Sudan's ambassador in Kinshasa said on Tuesday Sudanese rebels had joined in the spreading Congolese war, fighting alongside Ugandans who with Rwandans are backing forces opposed to Congo's President Laurent Kabila.

Ambassador Ali Sadiq Osman told Democratic Republic of the Congo state radio that guerrillas of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) helped Ugandan troops and Congolese rebels seize the towns of Isiro and Buta, close to the Sudan border.

"It is not a secret that it is thanks to the support of the Sudan People's Liberation Army that the Ugandan invaders penetrated to Isiro and Buta," he said.

Isiro fell to the rebels in September, and Buta, which is north of the rebel-held city of Kisangani, a little later.

Rwanda, Uganda and the Congolese rebels have accused Sudan of sending government forces to prop up Kabila, who is backed by

troops from Angola, Chad, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

Both Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo — former Zaire — have denied this, although military and aviation sources have given corroborating accounts of Sudanese involvement.

Sudan and Uganda traded accusations that each was backing the other's rebel enemies and cut off diplomatic ties in 1995.

Uganda has justified its involvement in the Congolese war by saying it is fighting

Ugandan rebels based in Congo.

After months of denying involvement at all, Rwanda also said last week its troops were fighting in Congo to foil attempts by exiled groups of its Hutu majority from staging armed attacks from Congo.

Osman said Sudan was giving Kabila diplomatic support. He said the Sudanese whom Uganda claimed to have captured in fighting were Sudanese traders seized by the Ugandan and SPLA troops in Buta and Isiro.

Switzerland's major companies have also been accused of close cooperation with the Nazi regime during World War II.

The Jewish state has never directly pointed its finger at Bern for its past behaviour. However, the Israeli-based JA has taken the Swiss banks to task over their delay in tracking down the heirs of Holocaust victims.

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Honours for Jewish money campaigners endanger Netanyahu visit: Swiss

BERN (AFP) — The Swiss government said Wednesday that Israel's decision to honour the architects of an accord forcing Swiss banks to repay money to Holocaust survivors had "cast a shadow" over the upcoming visit of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Swiss government spokesman Achille Casanova said the Swiss

government would tell Netanyahu during the planned Nov. 25 visit of "the irritation of the Swiss people" over the awards.

In a ceremony in the Israeli parliament on Tuesday, Netanyahu honoured the president of the World Jewish Council (WJC), Edgar Bronfman, Jewish Agency (JA) President Avraham Burg and New York city treasurer Alan Hevesi.

Former U.S. Senator Alfonse d'Amato was also honoured but could not attend the ceremony for health reasons.

In an attempt to smooth the way for his visit to Switzerland, the Israeli prime minister on Tuesday sent a letter to Swiss President Flavio Cotti, in which he said the honours "highlighted the good relations between our two countries

and Switzerland's remarkable capacity to face up to its past."

The Swiss government has been attacked for refusing entry to thousands of refugees fleeing Nazi persecution while Swiss banks have been accused of handling stolen Nazi gold and failing to help Holocaust survivors or their heirs recover money in dormant accounts dating back to the war.

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JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

Thursday Programmes
15:10: Cartoon — Superman
15:30: Drama — Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
16:00: Doc. — Life on the Digital Edge
17:00: French Programme
18:15: Sliders — Sparks
19:00: Comedy — The Journal
19:15: Science Magazine — L'Esprit de Colomb
19:30: News Headlines
19:35: Comedy — Family Matters
20:00: Doc. — Museums of the World
20:30: Drama — Dr. Quinn the Medicine Woman
21:10: Oprah Winfrey
22:00: News in English
22:30: Feature film — "The Owl"
23:59: Comedy — Dudley
00:30: End of T.X.
Friday Programmes
15:10: White Fang
15:30: Treasure Hunt
16:00: French film
17:15: The Simpsons
19:00: Le Journal
19:15: French Programme — Allo La Terre
19:30: News Headlines
19:35: Comedy — The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air
20:00: Cinema, Cinema
20:30: Babylon-5
21:10: Fox Cat Thin Mice
22:00: News in English
23:10: The X-Files
23:59: End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:42 Fajr
10:03 (Sunrise) Duha
11:21 Dhahr

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweibeh Tel. 5920740
Assessibles of God Church Tel. 463785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4634590
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 462266
Anglican Church Tel. 46248534624811
St. Athanasius Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751
Amman International Church Tel. 5865897
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 464932
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138
Church of Presentation, Sweibeh Tel. 5920146
The Uniate Catholic Church Tel. 4624757
The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679
The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052
The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331
The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
On Thursday, temperatures are expected to dip becoming slightly below average and winds westerly moderate to active. Skies will be partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers particularly in the northern parts of the Kingdom. On Friday, it will be fine and sunny during the day becoming relatively cool at night. In Agaba, it will be partly cloudy, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.
Amman 11/21
Agaba 16/27
Deserts 08/23
Jordan Valley 15/26
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 25, Agaba 26
Humidity readings: Amman 38 per cent, Agaba 45 per cent.
Following are the temperatures expected today in the following areas:
Ajloun 07/14
Jerash 12/20
Um Qays 09/19
Madaba 07/19
Petra 06/20
Dead Sea 15/27

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Abbas Al Hakim 4885446
Dr. Arafat Al Ashhab 5402507
Dr. Ayman Al Mubtash 4875748
Dr. Jamal Jbarah 5347351
AMMAN:
Firas Pharmacy 5661912
Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730
Mayadah Pharmacy 5537004
Rafiq Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169
IRBID:
Dr. Mohammad Al Shari 02/710058
Fou'ad Pharmacy 02/275360
ZARQA:
Dr. Mazen Saffarini 09/985832
Palestine Pharmacy 09/983562
EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 4637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 02/462111, 4637777
Fire Brigade 4671101
Blood Bank 4775121
Highway Police 5343402
Traffic Police 4896390
Public Security Dept. 4630321
Hotel Complaints 5605800
Water & Sewerage Complaints 489487
Amman Municipality Complaints 4787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 0132
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101
Abdall Tel. Repairs 5661101
Jordan Television 4773111
Radio Jordan 4774111

HOSPITALS

Water Authority 5680100
J. Electricity Authority 5815615
Electric Power Co. 4636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53300
Queen Alia Int. Airport 44-53200
AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199
The Islamic, Abdl 4642441/2
Hussein Medical Centre 5856856
Luzmila 4630195
Khalidi Maternity 4642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 4642441/2
Malhas, J. Amman 4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071
Shmeisani Hospital 5607431
Jordan Hospital 5607550
University Hospital 5353444
Al-Muasher Hospital 5667279
Al-Ahli, Abdl 56641646
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 4771012
Al-Bashir 4775111/26
Army, Marka 489161/115
Queen Alia Hospital 5157100
Amal Hospital 5667155
Al Amal Cancer Centre 5353000
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital 09/983323
Zarqa National Hospital 09/980560
Ibn Sina Hospital 09/986731
Al Hikma Modern Hospital 109690900
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital 02/725555
Roman Catholic Hospital 02/272275
Ibn Al Naices Hospital 02/7101372, 02/7103101
Rosary Sisters Hospital 02/7102831, 02/7102011

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:00 Sana'a (RJ)
08:25 Bombay (RJ)
08:50 Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:30 New Delhi (RJ)
10:05 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
10:35 Colombo (RJ)
12:40 Beirut (RJ)
15:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:25 London (RJ)
18:05 Kuwait (RJ)
19:00 Abu Dhabi, Al 'Ain (RJ)
19:05 Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)
19:20 Athens (RJ)
22:50 Larnaca (RJ)
Other Flights
13:15 Riyadh (SV)
14:05 Rome (AZ)
14:10 Sharjah (AF)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
09:30 Beirut (RJ)
10:35 Abu Dhabi, Al 'Ain (RJ)
11:25 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
12:05 Kuwait (RJ)
14:45 Doha (QR)
15:55 Dubai (EK)
17:25 Muscat, Dubai (GF)
18:40 Beirut (ME)
19:05 Paris (AF)
20:25 Tel Aviv (LY)
20:40 Cairo (MS)
23:10 Istanbul (TK)
00:25 Moscow (SU)
01:15 Amsterdam (KL)
04:10 London (BA)
Royal Wings (RW) Flights
For Thursday
09:30 Agaba (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
10:10 Agaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
16:00 Agaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
22:50 Agaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
00:15 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
For Friday
09:30 Agaba (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
10:10 Agaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
16:00 Agaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
18:45 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
22:50 Agaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
Other Flights
09:30 Beirut (RJ)
10:35 Abu Dhabi, Al 'Ain (RJ)
11:25 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
12:05 Kuwait (RJ)

Other Flights

06:35 Damascus, London (BA)
07:10 Frankfurt (LH)
14:45 Riyadh (SV)
15:00 Annabab, Algiers (AH)
15:30 Rome (AZ)
15:35 Doha (QR)
17:00 Damascus, Dubai (EK)
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02:15 Amsterdam (KL)
04:45 Alexandria (BA)
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The United
States Development Fund
for Women (UNFEM) will
hold a regional conference
on violence against women
in Jordan on Nov. 22
in Amman. The UNFEM
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first of its kind in Jordan
and will focus on the
prevention of violence
against women and the
protection of women
rights. The conference
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Israel expected to approve medical exams for prisoners today

By Caroline Faraj

AMMAN — Jordan is expecting to receive Israeli approval today to send a physician to examine Jordanian prisoners in Israeli jails, Jordan's ambassador to Tel Aviv, Omar Rifai, said Wednesday.

"Once we get the official approval, we'll arrange for the doctor to visit all Jordanian prisoners next week," Rifai told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview.

The issue of examining the Jordanian prisoners' health was raised after a visit on Oct. 20 by family members of 12 Jordanian prisoners held in Israel. The visit was the first to be approved by the Israeli government under the 1994 Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty.

"As in any prison, the medical attention is not adequate," the ambassador said. "Therefore, we thought of offering them general medical help in order to determine their health status, and if any of them need special care, we'll offer it immediately," he added.

The families of 14 Jordanian prisoners held in Israel issued a statement after the visit saying that the prisoners were suffering from serious health problems and urged the gov-

ernment to do its utmost to secure their release.

In the statement, the families said: "All the prisoners suffer from deteriorating psychological and health conditions as a result of their prolonged and unjustified detention and poor living conditions."

Rifai pointed out that the embassy is putting the prisoners issue on the top of its agenda and is arranging visits to them every week.

"Our aim is to secure the release of all Jordanian prisoners in Israel," the ambassador said. "But until this is achieved, we are in direct contact with all the prisoners."

Rifai said a Jordanian diplomat visits the prisoners once a week to become acquainted with their needs and then reports to the embassy.

After the trip by the families of the 12 prisoners, the embassy in Tel Aviv announced that there was a possibility of arranging another visit soon.

"We are trying to arrange another visit during the Holy Month of Ramadan," the ambassador said.

"We are using every possible effort and pressure in order to win the release of all our prisoners, and we hope that the

effort will lead to positive results," Rifai said.

The Jordanian prisoners had been held in two jails in Shata and Nafha before their recent transfer to the Ashkelon prison in southern Israel upon a request by the Jordanian authorities.

During the past four years, Israel freed more than 20 Jordanian prisoners involved in less serious offences, such as infiltrating into Israel or affiliation to banned militant groups.

Israel says the remaining 14 prisoners are convicted of serious offences, such as fatal attacks on Israelis. The Jewish state insists that they spend their prison terms in its territory, while Jordan is seeking their handover to Jordanian custody.

Israel freed most Jordanian prisoners in its jails more than one year ago in exchange for two Mossad agents who attempted to assassinate Khaled Misha'al, a leading member of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas.

In addition to the 14 Jordanians imprisoned on security charges, there are six more Jordanians held in Israel for criminal offences, sources said.

During meeting with PLC Speaker Qoureira Regent stresses importance of Jordanian-Palestinian coordination

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Wednesday underlined the importance of maintaining and strengthening Jordanian-Palestinian coordination in order to safeguard the interests of the two peoples.

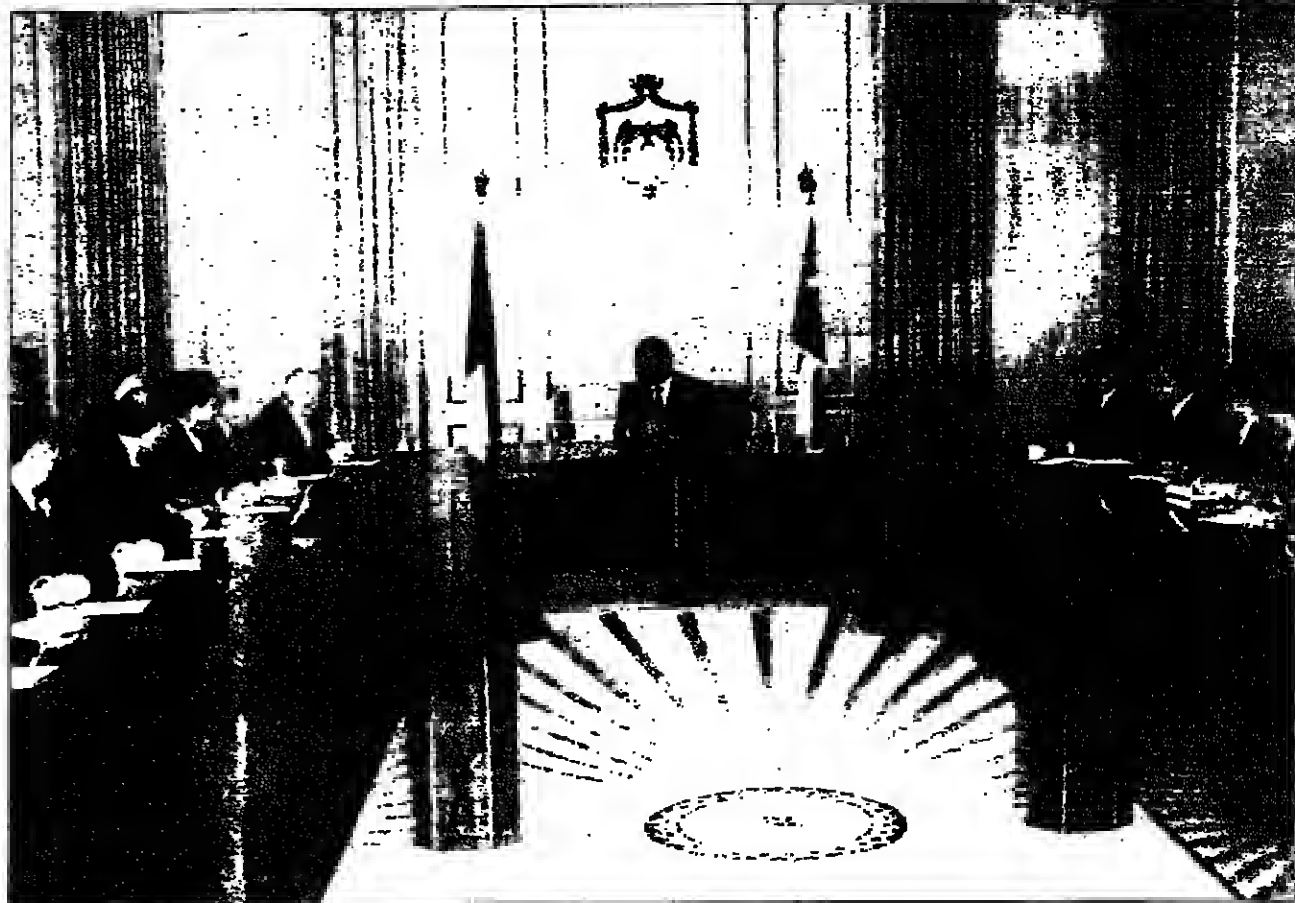
At a meeting with a visiting Palestinian Legislative Council delegation led by PLC Speaker Ahmad Qoureira, the Regent said close cooperation will help the two sides reach common stands vis-à-vis issues of mutual concern, such as the questions of Jerusalem, water, refugees, security and common borders.

The Regent emphasised that such coordination is particularly important before the Palestinians begin final status negotiations with the Israelis.

Prince Hassan said His Majesty King Hussein is seeking to maintain and strengthen Palestinian-Jordanian relations, including parliamentary ties.

During the meeting, which was attended by Royal Court Chief Jawad Anani, Lower House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour and Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib, the Crown Prince reaffirmed Jordan's absolute support for the Palestinian people in their struggle to regain their rights and establish an independent state on Palestinian soil.

The Regent, who hosted a lunch in honour of the Palestinian delegation, also said the two sides should raise the level of cooperation in the fields of health, trade, economy and



HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, meets with the visiting PLC delegation at the Royal Court on Wednesday (Photo by Boghos)

culture, among others.

For his part, Qoureira voiced the Palestinian's appreciation of Jordan's support, noting in particular the King's efforts in the successful conclusion of the Wye deal. He stressed the PNA's determination to coordinate its stand with Jordan, especially during the final status negotiations.

Earlier Wednesday, Qoureira said the Palestinians need as much support from Jordan as possible in the upcoming negotiations

with the Israeli government.

Speaking at a meeting with Minister of State for Development Affairs Taher Kanaan, Qoureira added that the Palestinians attach great importance to the unique relationship with Jordan and hope to expand economic and investment cooperation.

For his part, Kanaan said the government plans to take a series of measures designed to enhance bilateral cooperation in general and in economic and

investment fields in particular.

Qoureira, on his first official visit to Jordan at the head of the PLC delegation, also met with Khatib to review recent developments in the peace process and the Wye River accord.

Qoureira underlined the need for bilateral cooperation in parliamentary fields and for constant consultations.

Khatib said transparency and frank discussions between the two sides can help safeguard the inter-

ests of the two peoples.

Earlier, the Palestinian delegation met with Senate Speaker Zeid Rifai and discussed bilateral relations, the peace process and the Wye accord.

Rifai said the Kingdom is fully committed to the peace process and the establishment of a comprehensive regional peace.

The Senate speaker underlined the need for continued cooperation at all levels to further strengthen ties between Jordan and Palestine.

U.N. women's fund launches regional campaign against violence on Nov. 22

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) Western Asia Regional Office will launch a regional campaign for the elimination of violence against women on Nov. 22.

The campaign, to be held under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, UNIFEM's goodwill ambassador, will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the fifth anniversary of the World Conference on Human Rights with its historic recognition of "Women's Rights are Human Rights."

It is part of a global campaign designed to highlight the achievements of women and to shed light on the obstacles impeding the advancement of their cause, organisers said.

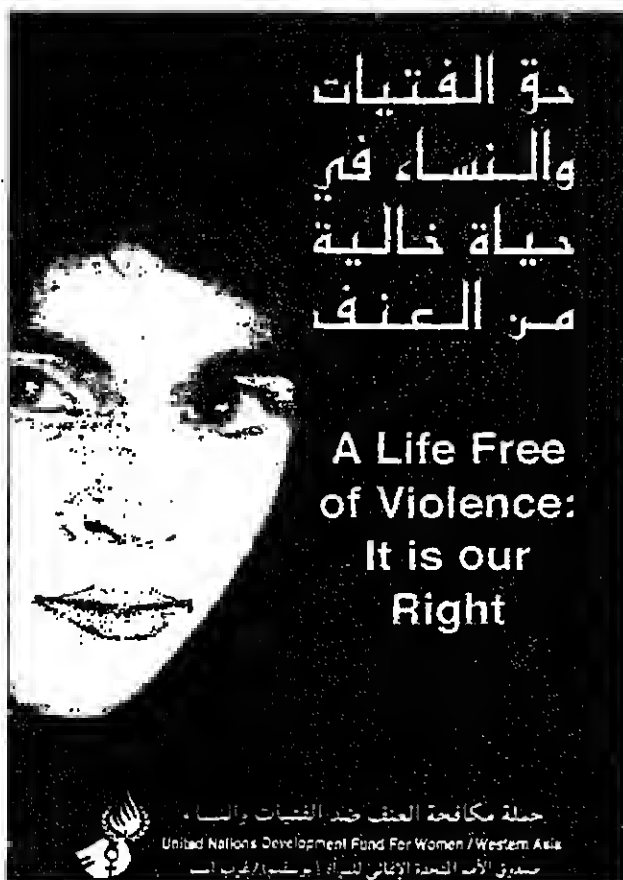
Under the theme "A life free of violence: It is our right," the regional campaign aims at raising public awareness on the various forms of violence to which women are subjected, such as domestic violence, crimes of honour, female genital mutilation, armed conflict, and legal violence, among others.

According to a 1994 Public Security Department study prepared for the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1994, a total of 4,962 cases of domestic violence against Jordanian women were registered with the police between 1991 and 1992.

Other objectives of the campaign include empowering women as valuable partners in society, promoting a culture free of violence, shedding light on the causes and the grave effects of violence against women at all levels within a regional context and highlighting success stories in addressing these problems, organisers said.

Crimes of honour have for the past 10 years topped the list of murders in Jordan involving women. These types of murders are committed by male relatives of women on the grounds that they are engaged in illicit relationships.

However, the government is taking major steps towards eliminating legislation that is



'A Life Free of Violence: It is our Right' logo

seen as discriminatory against women and is working on building a women's shelter.

Last year, His Majesty King Hussein made a passionate plea for all Jordanians to shun violence against women and called for paying adequate attention to ending the suffering of women and children.

The King, speaking at the opening of the 13th Parliament last November, expressed regret that women were still exposed to inhuman practices that deprived them of basic and essential rights.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, during a recent meeting with tribal leaders, called for an end to crimes of honour.

"Let us remember that the honour of the whole Jordanian family is more noble than the loss of life of this generation due to the trivialities of 'honour causes'," Prince Hassan said.

"I hope that all those concerned in this regard will bear the responsibility with me in eliminating this problem, which

does not deserve so much time and effort," the Prince added.

In partnership with a number of national institutions, UNIFEM's campaign in Jordan will include a symposium on domestic violence in cooperation with the Jordanian National Committee for Women, a public march with the General Federation of Jordanian Women, an essay and drawing competition for students in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, a roundtable to launch a recent study on violence against women in the Kingdom in collaboration with the Human Rights Forum for Women and extensive media coverage.

Similar activities will be held in the other four countries in the region: Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen.

An information kit containing the definition of and information about violence against women in countries of the region will be distributed to the media on the day of the launch, organisers said.

Jordanian-Syrian water committee opens talks next week

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — A joint Jordanian-Syrian committee is expected to meet Saturday to study ways and means of better utilising the Yarmouk River's water, officials said Wednesday.

During the two-day discussions, Jordan Valley Authority Secretary General Dureid Mahasneh and Barakat Hadid of Syria's Ministry of Water and Irrigation will explore ways of exploiting the Yarmouk

River's water next winter, measures to ensure that Jordan receives high-quality water and other related issues.

It will be the committee's fourth meeting since October 1997, when the two sides agreed to go ahead with plans to construct a dam on the Yarmouk.

The long-delayed JD283 million dam would be built in accordance with a 1987 agreement between the two countries. It would have a storage capacity of

225 million cubic metres.

The river, which provides Jordan with 135 million cubic metres of water per year, begins in Syria, flows along the Syrian-Jordan border and then joins the Jordan River downstream from Lake Tiberias.

Jordan has often complained that it is only getting a fraction of its water share because Syria has set up more than 28 ditches along the Yarmouk to store water.

Israel agreed to give the Kingdom over 200 million cubic metres of water annually, mostly from the Yarmouk River, under the 1994 peace treaty.

Last month, Jordan and Israel began construction on a JD1.65 million project to more effectively utilise 40 million cubic metres of the Yarmouk River's overflow per year and regulate a year-round inflow of water to the 110-kilometre-long King Abdullah Canal. The gov-

ernment said constructing such a project would not negate the partnership with Syria regarding the planned dam.

According to official Jordanian figures, the country's population, increasing by 3.5 per cent annually, will need 1.2 billion cubic metres of water per year between 1998 and 2000. But the Kingdom's current water resources only amount to 960 million cubic metres a year.

'Student detained following rally against peace deal'

By Tareq Ajyoub

AMMAN — Police have detained the chairperson of the student council of Mu'ta University after he and six other students were suspended after staging a rally against the recent Israel-PNA peace deal, a student council spokesperson said Wednesday.

Ibrahim Mansi, who led the Oct. 25 rally during which Israeli and American flags were set ablaze, was detained outside the gates of the university on Tuesday, the spokesperson said.

"They [the police] showed him an arrest warrant and took him away," the spokesperson, who requested anonymity, said. "We have received no information on his whereabouts."

University officials were not immediately available for comment on

the detention.

The university's disciplinary committee last week ordered that Mansi and six other students be suspended for different lengths for their role in staging the rally and for urging students to join the march to protest the Wye peace deal.

The Arabic daily Al Ra'i this week quoted Adel Twaisi, dean of Student Affairs at the university, as saying that the decision to suspend the students was fair and was made in line with university regulations.

"The only reason this punishment was handed down against them is because the head of the Student Council and some other members used microphones and began instigating students to stage acts of unrest inside the university," he said.

"They also organised a march inside the universi-

ty in which some participants wore masks to hide their faces, and some even attacked the university guards. These are acts that we condemn. These acts had a negative influence on studies at the university for three days."

Twaisi added, however, said the disciplinary committee decision to suspend the seven would only become effective after ratification by the university council of deans.

The other students who were suspended by the university were identified as Malik Male'e, Wisam Dalaen, Mohammad Fa'ouri, Ibrahim Shabin, Arif Debeh and Hassan Awadat.

Mu'ta University has both a military and a civilian wing offering various programmes. The seven are all from the civilian wing.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Agreements with Turkey endorsed

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree was issued Wednesday endorsing two agreements with Turkey. Under the first agreement, both Jordan and Turkey will increase agricultural cooperation, work to develop agricultural skills and facilitate trade in fresh and processed agricultural products. The agreement also provides for implementing joint agricultural research programmes, encouraging investment and setting up joint projects in both Jordan and Turkey. The second agreement provides for cooperation in the field of youth and sports. Under the deal's provisions, both countries will participate in youth and scouts gatherings and camps and will exchange delegations and sports teams.

Fertility conference opens

AMMAN (J.T.) — Under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath, the fifth annual scientific meeting of the Middle East Fertility Society was opened on Wednesday at the Palace of Culture. Addressing the opening ceremony, a society official, Maher Sarraf, said the conference's main objective was the dissemination of information that can help infertile couples conceive. He noted that nearly five million out of the 300 million inhabitants of the Middle East suffer from infertility. Taking part in the three-day event are gynaecologists and obstetricians from different regions of the world.

Culture minister leaves for conference

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Culture and Youth Talal Sa'at al-Jassas today leaves for the UAE emirate of Sharja to take part in a two-day conference of Arab ministers of culture that opens Saturday. In a statement before leaving, Hassan said the conference will examine such issues as Arab culture in the 21st century, prospects of establishing a pan-Arab cultural satellite channel and the image of Arab culture on the Internet. The meeting will also discuss the feasibility of setting up an Arab fund for cultural development and means of financing it through private sector contributions, in addition to establishing a pan-Arab library.

what's going on

FILMS

* "Divinus pala-bras" at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

LECTURE

* "The Sanctuaries of Wadi Kharrar" by Father Michelle Piccirillo at the City Hall, Amman Municipality, Ras Al 'Ain on Saturday Nov. 21 at 6:30 p.m. (The lecture will discuss the importance of Tell Kharrar where

modern explorers have found pottery shards from Roman periods and stone vessels).

EXHIBITIONS

* Photography exhibition entitled "Windows and Doors" by Hani Hourani at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until Dec. 18.

* Display of Jordan River Foundation (JRF) 1998 autumn/winter collection entitled "Falling Leaves" at the JRF showroom, Jabal Amman (Tel. 4613081), until Nov. 30.

* Crossroads of Civilisations: More Than 100 Years of German Archaeological Activities in Jordan" (Sponsored by the German Protestant Institute in cooperation with Petra Store Preservation) at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Nov. 28.

* A three-dimensional exhibition on canvas by Susana Caldwell, Darfeen Karpowicz, and Rawabi, AbuGhezi-Silawi at the Jordan Arts and Crafts Centre (Artsana), Jabal Amman, of the Second Circle, until Nov. 20 (Tel. 4647855).

* Exhibition of watercolours by Mukaram Haghdouga at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until Nov. 24.

* "Masterworks of the Spanish Contemporary Architecture and Presentation of Architecture Guide: Spain 1920-2000" at the University of Jordan, Faculty of Engineering, until Nov. 20.

* Paintings by Jordanian artist Mohammad Abu Aziz at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Amman, until Nov. 28.

سكنا من ليد

Serb president heads for Kosovo despite Albanian boycott

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AP) — Serbia's president arrived in Kosovo Wednesday for talks doomed to failure because of a boycott by ethnic Albanians, while a newspaper published what it reported was a U.S. draft plan outlining virtual self-rule for the province.

President Milan Milutinovic was pressing for a direct meeting with a Kosovo Albanian delegation, apparently seeking to assert Serbia's stand that any negotiations on the future of the separatist province is its internal issue.

But Serb authority over Kosovo appeared to be put to question in the draft plan published by the daily Koha Ditore.

It envisages almost no Serb control of the Albanian-majority province, while leaving it under partial jurisdiction of Yugoslavia, made up of Serbia and Montenegro.

There was no immediate confirmation of the authenticity of the plan. But previous versions published in the past have proven accurate.

U.S. envoy Christopher Hill, trying to find a peace formula, discussed the American draft Tuesday with independence-minded ethnic Albanian guerrillas. Their support is crucial in the wake of an uneasy cease fire that for the most part ended nearly eight months of fighting between them and a joint force of Yugoslav army

and Serb police forces.

There were no immediate comments from Serb and Albanian politicians. But Serb media have reported the government disapproves of the plan because it sharply curtails its authority in the province.

The draft published Wednesday said Kosovo would have its own president, courts, government and parliament. Only defence, foreign affairs, customs, foreign trade and monetary policy would be in the hands of the Yugoslav federation.

The plan further envisages Kosovo's many ethnic communities sharing power according to ethnic structure — giving Kosovo's 90-per cent Albanian majority the clear advantage — and solving disputed internal issues in the Kosovo Supreme Court. If the dispute remains unresolved it would go to the European courts.

Disputes with Serbia and the federation would be solved in a special court, which would include representatives of Yugoslavia, Kosovo and the international community.

The reported plan seems to push Kosovo further away from Serbia and bring it closer to becoming a de-facto third republic in the Yugoslav federation. Koha Ditore said it published only the first part of the plan.

Serbia is unlikely to accept such a solution for Kosovo because it insists that its province is the cradle of Serb history and culture.

A top ethnic Albanian negotiator, however, indicated Tuesday his side could settle for less than long-proclaimed goal of independence. Fehmi Agani said giving Kosovo equal rights as Serbia and Montenegro within Yugoslavia would be acceptable, if such status were respected by Serbia.

It was not clear whether the rebel Kosovo Liberation Army would agree to any deal short of the independence they have been fighting for. The guerrillas said they would give their opinion on the plan in 10 days.

Agani and others who are part of the more moderate camp around ethnic Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova said they would boycott talks called for by Milutinovic, describing it as a cheap publicity stunt. Agani said a basic formula for Kosovo must be found before direct talks could start.

Ethnic Albanians have so far rejected 16 such invitations for talks by the Serbian government. The Serbs are apparently trying to ease international pressure by attempting to persuade world powers that they are committed to peace.

U.N. tribunal expects immediate cooperation from Belgrade

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Officials at the Yugoslav war crimes tribunal said Wednesday they expected immediate compliance from Belgrade with a U.N. Security Council resolution calling on Yugoslavia to cooperate fully with the U.N. court.

The council demanded Tuesday that Belgrade arrest three former Yugoslav National Army officers charged with organising a massacre of 200 Croats in 1991 and said it deplored Yugoslavia's recent refusal to allow investigators to visit the embattled Serbian province of Kosovo.

The resolution is "explicit and unequivocal in what is expected from the authorities in Belgrade," tribunal spokesman Jim Landale said.

It "should leave them in no doubt that the international community will hold them to their obligations under international law. The ball is now in

their court and we expect them to take immediate action."

Yugoslav authorities cite a constitutional ban on extraditing suspects as a reason for repeatedly refusing to hand over the three officers despite international warrants for their arrest.

But the resolution, passed by a 14-0 vote with China abstaining, rejected that argument.

"A state may not invoke provisions of its domestic law as justification for its failure to perform binding obligations under international law," the council said.

The resolution, which is legally binding, did not contain the threat of punitive action if Yugoslavia doesn't comply.

The council also repeated its call to Yugoslav authorities and leaders of the Kosovo Albanian community to cooperate with the tribunal in the investigation of possible war crimes.

Yugoslav authorities have

refused to grant investigators visas to work in Kosovo, claiming the tribunal has no jurisdiction.

Tribunal Deputy Prosecutor Graham Blewitt said he was still hoping to get investigators into the province "at the earliest opportunity." Blewitt also said that he and Chief Prosecutor Louise Arbour no longer planned to head the team.

Meanwhile, investigators are interviewing witnesses who have fled Kosovo, he said. He gave no further details.

Hundreds have been killed since February when Serb forces began a crackdown on ethnic Albanian separatists. Hundreds of thousands have been forced from their homes.

Ethnic Albanians, who make up 90 per cent of Kosovo's population, favour independence, while Serbs consider Kosovo an integral part of Serbia, the dominant Republic of Yugoslavia.

Blair prepares for showdown with House of Lords

LONDON (R) — Britain's Labour government Wednesday prepared for a showdown with the House of Lords over the government's planned voting system for next year's European elections.

For the fourth time in a month, the unelected upper chamber of parliament Tuesday night threw out the government's plan to have a "closed list" where voters choose a party rather than individual candidates for European elections.

With no compromise in sight before the end of the current parliamentary session this week, it could mean that seats in the European parliament will be decided under the existing "first-past-the-post" system, which is expected to favour Labour.

Interior minister Jack Straw raised the stakes Wednesday, by saying in a BBC radio interview there was no time for the government to override the upper house by reintroducing the bill in the next session next week.

Unless the Conservative-led peers backed down, Straw said, the bill would fail with the paradoxical consequence that the Conservative party would

win fewer seats in European elections next June.

Critics say Prime Minister Tony Blair is pushing through the reforms as part of a drive to make sure his party has more control over its choice of candidates. Labour has been accused of trying to exclude "unsuitable" left-wingers from the new Welsh and Scottish parliaments as well as the poll for London's mayor.

The Times newspaper said in an editorial: "The real affront would be for the government to force through a voting system which gives party machines more power at the voters' expense."

The ermine-clad former ministers and ageing aristocrats who populate the House of Lords have a reputation for glorying in archaic tradition and for opposing the government's will.

Elderly peers of the realm only agreed after much resistance Monday to allow the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine — a top minister in Blair's cabinet — to swap his traditional black tights, breeches and silver-buckled patent leather shoes for something more modern.

A bill to remove the right of hereditary peers to sit and vote in the Lords will be high on the list of government legislation for the new session of parliament, to be outlined in the traditional speech by Queen Elizabeth Tuesday.

Blair's official spokesman called the House of Lords vote an "affront to democracy" and accused the Conservative party of "wheeling out hereditary peers" to block the reforms.

But Conservative leader William Hague said opposition to the government proposals went wider than his own party's peers.

"Of the 261 peers that voted against the government last night, 101 were Conservative hereditary peers. The cross-bench peers who are independent of all the parties voted overwhelmingly against the government... so it's not just in the hands of the Conservatives," Hague told BBC radio.

The government lost the vote in the Lords because they lost the argument," he added.

The government's business managers will bring the bill back to the lower House of Commons Wednesday before presenting it again to the unelected House of Lords for a fifth time.



German journalist Juergen Kremb frowns at a news briefing at his office in Beijing. China Wednesday ordered the expulsion of Kremb, one day after serving him with an arrest warrant for possession of state secrets. The veteran Der Spiegel correspondent was the second foreign journalist to be expelled from China over the past month (Reuters photo)

China expels German journalist

BEIJING (AFP) — China Wednesday expelled the Beijing correspondent of the German weekly Der Spiegel, accusing him of possessing state secrets.

"A bunch of plainclothes officers stormed into my office, pressed me up against the wall and read out my expulsion order around 2:00 p.m.," said Juergen Kremb, who has already moved to Singapore and had returned to Beijing to wind up his eight-year posting in China.

"I have really no clues as to what I have apparently done, and I don't know why they came out so strong. I think it was very stupid," he told an impromptu press conference.

Kremb flew into Beijing Tuesday to wind up his affairs, write a story on chess and architecture and arrange his farewell lunch with China's foreign ministry.

Twenty minutes after he arrived from the airport, eight people from China's State Security Ministry burst into his office. Kremb said he was forced to stand against a wall for three hours with a strong light pointed at him while they searched his office.

"Actually, I was quite afraid yesterday. It was very tense when they got out the arrest warrant with my name on it and the handcuffs," he said.

Kremb was found to "possess illegally Chinese secret

documents and has violated Chinese laws," a foreign ministry spokesman told AFP.

The spokesman said the state security service had collected a large quantity of evidence, given Kremb 48 hours to leave the country and forbidden him to return within five years.

The German embassy stated that Bernhard Kampmann, counsellor for press affairs, was summoned to China's foreign ministry half an hour after State Security ordered Kremb to leave the country. Kremb counts himself as a close friend of prominent dissident Wei Jingsheng, who went into exile in the United States a year ago after spending 18 years in prison, and the Chinese version of his book on Wei came out in Taiwan a fortnight ago.

"I have been writing regularly about the dissident scene. I wrote a book on Wei Jingsheng and often wrote about state security, the police and the military," Kremb said.

"But this is like a bad movie. It is surreal... I must be the first correspondent who has been expelled after he left," he said, adding that he had only planned to stay in China for five days on this trip and his visa would have expired anyway on Dec. 18.

Kremb was detained for 48 hours in April 1997 after visiting the eastern province

of Anhui, accompanied by Wei's youngest brother, Wei Xiaotao. He was also briefly detained twice during this year's summer floods for visiting disaster areas without permission.

Foreign journalists in China are required to apply for approval before they can make reporting trips in the provinces and theoretically before they talk to any Chinese person.

Kremb's expulsion brought sharp criticism from China's Foreign Correspondents Club (FCC) and the Paris-based Reporters sans Frontières which said the expulsion was "a very serious infringement of press freedom."

Chinese authorities have shown signs of nerves in recent weeks over journalists and photographers who report on growing social discontent.

Kremb is the second journalist to be expelled in a month. Yukihisa Nakatsu, a correspondent of Japan's Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper, was told to leave in October after also being accused of obtaining state secrets.

At the beginning of the 1980s, a former reporter of Der Spiegel, Tiziano Terzani, was expelled. Another correspondent of the German daily Frankfurter Rundschau had to leave China at the end of 1995 when the authorities refused to renew his visa.

NEWS IN BRIEF

16,000 evacuated near Berlin due to WWII-era bombs

ORANIENBURG, Germany (AP) — State roads were closed, trains halted and 16,000 people evacuated from their homes near Berlin Wednesday while experts worked at defusing two big U.S. bombs from World War II. The chemical fuses on the bombs — designed to ignite not on impact but hours later — were still live and could go off at any time, authorities said. One 500 kilo bomb was unearthed during construction on a park, and a 250 kilo bomb was found during work on a golf course. About half of Oranienburg was evacuated shortly before noon. The city, just north of Berlin in former East Germany, was a centre for arms production during World War II — including enriched uranium for Adolf Hitler's atomic bomb project — and so a prime target for Allied bombing raids. More than 60 duds have been found there since a construction boom started following German unification in 1990. None have exploded in Oranienburg since 1991, when three people were injured and 10 houses destroyed. Many residents resent the constant evacuation orders — a dozen so far this year alone. In April, 10 residents were fined 1,000 marks (\$625) each for refusing to leave their homes during a defusing action. Among them was a mother who barricaded herself and her two young children in their apartment. About 100 kilometres east in Frankfurt am der Oder, 450 people were evacuated from their homes Wednesday while authorities defused two World War II-era bombs.

Diana teams to help care for terminally ill children

LONDON (AP) — Paying tribute to the late Princess Diana, the British government Wednesday introduced the "Diana teams" that will assist families caring for terminally ill children at home. The care teams, which could include a combination of doctors, nurses, psychologists and social workers, will be paid for by the National Health Service, Britain's universal health-care programme. "As well as providing specialist nursing care and practical help when it is most needed, these Diana teams will bring emotional support for all the family," Health Minister Baroness Hayman said. Ten teams will be launched initially at a cost of £2 million (\$3.3 million). They will be tested and evaluated before other teams are created throughout the country. "They will be a lasting contribution to the memory of Princess Diana, whose love of children and concern for the chronically sick and disabled was so well-known," Baroness Hayman said. The idea for the teams was suggested by a memorial committee formed after the princess' 1997 death in a Paris car crash. The other main memorials are a garden and a commemorative coin.

Environmentalists concerned over appointment

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (UPI) — Some environmentalists consider it their worst nightmare come true: the selection of State Senator Charles Bronson as chairman of the upper chamber's Natural Resources Committee. Conservation groups have given the Republican cattle rancher low ratings for his legislative record in recent years. Bronson originally drew the ire of environmentalists years ago when he appeared on the Senate floor wearing a paper bird on his head to protest special protection for the white ibis. The Natural Resources Committee will shape the future of the state's Preservation 2000 land-buying programme, which ends in two years. Last year, Bronson criticised the conservation programme, saying it takes too much money off the tax rolls.

Six homeless die in cold snap in Romania

BUCHAREST (AFP) — Six homeless people have died in a cold snap in northern Romania, medical officials said Wednesday. Many roads have been blocked by heavy snowfalls in the region, in particular in the Iasi province, and a sharp increase in accidents and traffic jams has been reported. More than 70 people were treated in one hospital, in the town of Botosani, for injuries sustained due to the weather. Four people have also died in Poland in the cold snap, the first of the winter.

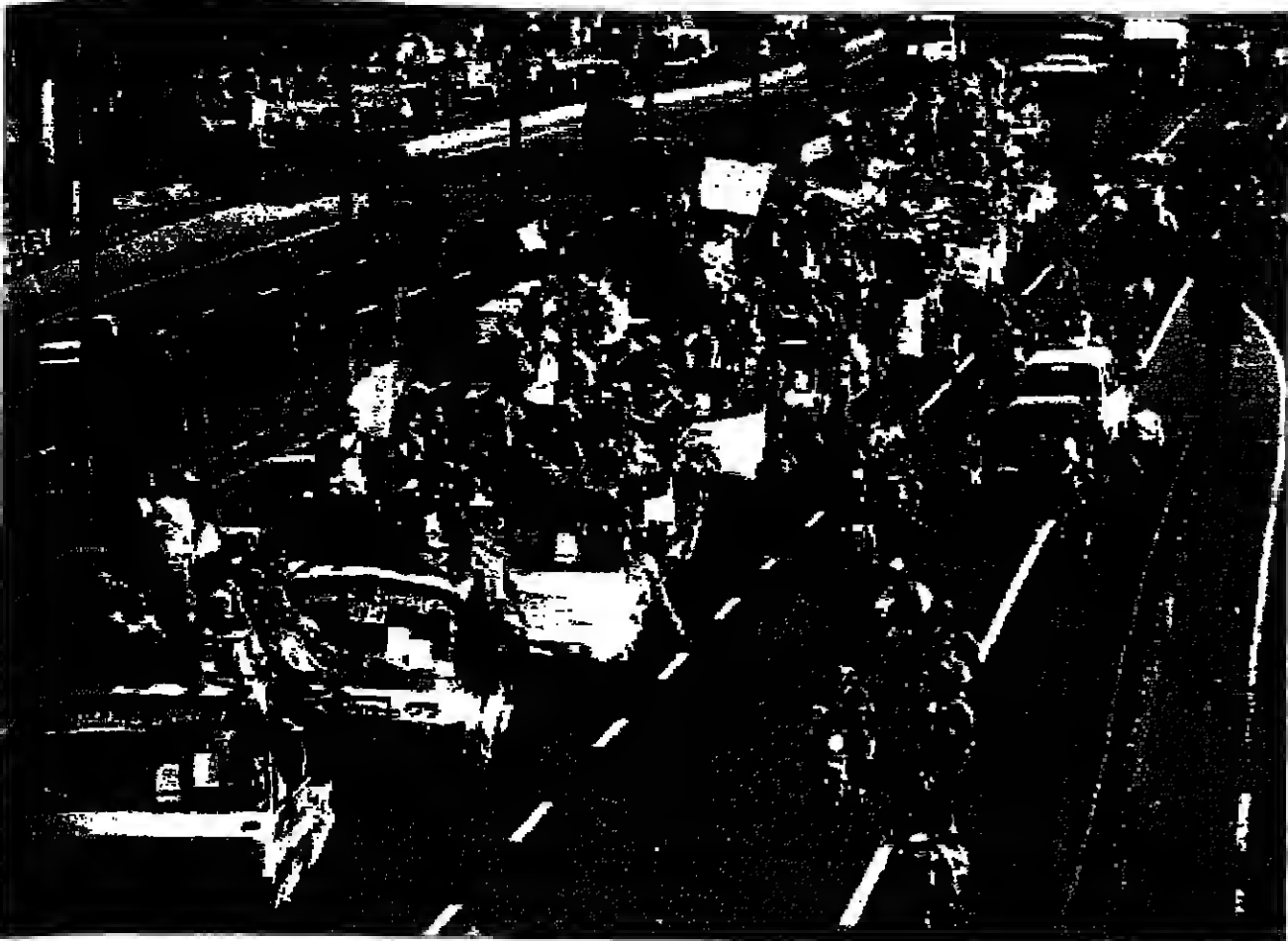
U.K.'s favourite cook cracks success with eggs

LONDON (R) — The television chef who got a roasting last month for teaching Britons how to boil an egg has in fact cracked a recipe for success. Egg sales have soared by 1.3 million a day since Delia Smith, Britain's best-selling cookery writer, launched her back to basics television show six weeks ago, egg producers said Wednesday. Smith, who a few years ago turned cranberries from an exotic fruit into an everyday staple in British supermarkets, was initially attacked by some of her celebrity cook rivals for insulting the intelligence of viewers with her detailed instructions on making toast, boiling eggs and cooking omelettes. But the 10 per cent increase in egg sales suggests she is more in touch with the nation's notoriously bad cooks than more adventurous television chefs. "Whatever Delia turns her hands to become immensely popular, and we're delighted she chose eggs," said Graham Muir, marketing manager at Stonegate Farmers. A recent opinion poll highlighted the limitations of Britons in the kitchen. Of those who said they cook, 36 per cent listed making sandwiches as their main cooking skills, and 31 per cent cited toast.

No sex please, there's a solar eclipse on the way

LONDON (R) — Women in Cornwall are being warned not to get pregnant this month in case they end up giving birth in the middle of next year's solar eclipse. Doctors fear there will be so many people in the southwestern English county next August to watch the rare total eclipse that women in labour will not be able to get to hospital through the traffic-clogged roads. As many as two million people are expected to descend on the region in nine months' time for the best and longest view of the eclipse — the first to be seen in Britain since 1927. The warning to avoid August births was issued by the Local Medical Committee of Cornwall, which represents general practitioners in the area, in a newsletter for doctors under its "Eclipse health tip of the month." "We don't want to pour cold water on things, but people should realise that they could be very vulnerable," said the committee's spokeswoman, Rosalind Winter. Many doctors are reported to have pinned the newsletter up in their offices.

1250



Indonesian students wave national flags from the top of buses as they drive towards parliament Jakarta. About 2,000 students took to the streets to march towards parliament and to the campus where several were killed last week in clashes between anti-government protesters and the security forces. At least 14 people were killed, most when troops fired into student demonstrators, and 450 wounded in the violence (Reuters photo)

Yeltsin fans health fears by axing India trip

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin pulled out of a trip to India Wednesday, fanning fresh fears about his shaky health and underscoring Premier Yevgeny Primakov's dominant role in Russian politics.

Primakov will represent Yeltsin on the Dec. 6-7 visit to New Delhi during which the two countries are due to formally extend a tight military cooperation agreement until 2010.

It will mark the third successive time that Yeltsin has called his place at an important foreign summit to Primakov, confirmed as prime minister just two months ago.

The announcement dealt another blow to Yeltsin, coming just one day after the president, looking more vigorous than he had in days, returned to the world stage to host German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder in the Kremlin.

It also coincided with a new debate in Russia's par-

liament Wednesday on whether to adopt a new law requiring Yeltsin to take a physical and then publish its results.

Although Yeltsin had long ago dropped direct oversight of the Russian economy, he had revelled in appearing at summits with foreign leaders.

Yeltsin stacked his appointment book this autumn with visits and Moscow summits partially meant to show the Kremlin chief was still in direct charge of top policy decisions.

But the Moscow summits, including one with Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi, have largely been watered down to a bare minimum. The foreign visits have nearly all been scratched.

The Kremlin stressed that Yeltsin would still host Chinese President Jiang Zemin next Monday and insisted that it had no evidence of a down-turn in Yeltsin's medical condition.

Yeltsin has now cancelled all three foreign visits since putting in a stumbling performance during his last trip abroad — to Central Asia in October — when he nearly fell over during a welcoming ceremony and failed to deliver a coherent toast at an official dinner in his honour.

Kremlin doctors attributed Yeltsin's performance to "nervous exhaustion" and an unstable blood pressure. Yeltsin spent three weeks recovering at a Moscow area sanatorium and a Black Sea presidential resort.

Primakov in his absence has filled in for Yeltsin at a pivotal Russia-European Union summit last month in Vienna in which he paved the way for Russia to receive almost \$500 million in food aid this winter.

Tuesday in Kuala Lumpur, Primakov met U.S. Vice President Al Gore for 90 minutes, in which he presented Russia's recently drafted economic revitali-

sation package and negotiated the potential resumption of loan payments from the International Monetary Fund.

Russian media report that Yeltsin's aides and family have urged Yeltsin to cancel all future foreign visits except for next June's Group of Eight summit in Cologne.

Schröder after meeting Yeltsin Tuesday said the Russian president was expected to travel to Germany next summer and pronounced Yeltsin as fit and well aware of important political developments.

But Schröder stressed he would not duplicate his predecessor Helmut Kohl's building of German-Russia ties based on a strong personal friendship with Yeltsin.

The German chancellor added that he could not think of a single issue that could not be worked out through his direct negotiations with Primakov.

Sri Lanka says 13 killed in fresh clashes with LTTE

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lanka's defence ministry said Wednesday that 12 Tamil Tiger rebels and one soldier were killed and almost 40 combatants were wounded in fresh clashes in the north.

It said in a statement four rebels and one soldier were killed when troops ambushed a group of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels in the northwestern Mannar district Tuesday.

The statement also said troops fired artillery shells at a rebel bunker line in the

northern Kilinochchi district Tuesday and destroyed it.

"Monitored terrorist transmissions confirm that six terrorists were killed and 36 were injured during the attack," the statement said. Two other rebels were killed elsewhere in the northern Wanni region, it added.

The LTTE rebels pushed the military out of Kilinochchi town after severe fighting in September.

The statement said there was an exchange of mortar

fire between the troops and the rebels near the northern town of Mankulam, which the military took control of in September.

Three soldiers were wounded during the fighting, it added.

The ministry also said in the statement that the Sri Lankan navy had detected a rebel flotilla off north-eastern Mullaitivu and attacked it, sinking one boat and damaging three others.

There were no immediate comments from the LTTE on the latest fighting and

no independent confirmation of events was possible as journalists are not allowed to visit the battle zone.

The government in June slapped censorship on war reporting after the military stepped up its campaign to wrest control of a key northern highway.

The LTTE rebels have been fighting for a separate homeland in Sri Lanka's north and east since 1983, accusing the Sinhalese majority of oppressing the Tamil minority.

Indonesian students back on the streets for protests

JAKARTA (AFP) — Thousands of Indonesian students took to the streets in at least eight cities Wednesday to mourn victims of clashes with security forces and launch new calls for reform, witnesses said.

In Jakarta, 500 students on 15 buses negotiated for hours with hundreds of police and soldiers on guard near parliament, where legislators resumed a meeting to debate political bills.

Other demonstrations were held in the capital, and in cities including Solo, Yogyakarta and Padang.

Outside parliament, students stuck papers on the shields of anti-riot police at the front of the security barage. Slogans on the stickers questioned subversion accusations against opposition leaders who have been interrogated by police.

Three rows of anti-riot police blocked the wide avenue leading to parliament. Behind them stood hundreds of anti-riot troops, some 30 military police and

more than 100 marines.

Indonesia had seen relative calm since several days of clashes in Jakarta last week which left 16 people dead and more than 400 injured. Tuesday was a Muslim public holiday.

President B.J. Habibie has accused unnamed groups of "subversion" that led to the clashes.

Students and opposition figures have in turn called for military chief General Wiranto to resign over the deaths.

The students were finally allowed to approach the front gate of the parliament where some 20 representatives laid wreaths, before they joined 4,000 students gathered at the Atma Jaya Catholic University, the scene of violent clashes last Friday night.

Some 300 students who marched from a roundabout in central Jakarta, arrived at Atma Jaya with some 1,700 other students and people who had joined them on the three kilometres route.

In Solo, Central Java,

thousands of students, joined by supporters marched from two campuses to the local military headquarters to protest violence by troops in Jakarta, said Fathoni, a local member of the United Development Party (PPP).

A Solo police official said there were around 5,000 demonstrators but no incidents had been reported.

According to the PPP official around 300 party members and hundreds more from the Indonesian Democracy Party (PDI) were helping to keep order and prevent a recurrence of troubles in May.

Riots in Solo in May, following the shooting of four students in Jakarta, left the city centre devastated with hundreds of buildings set on fire and looted.

In Yogyakarta, southwest of Solo, hundreds of students marched to the state Radio Republik Indonesia station to demand that it broadcast their call for Wiranto to resign.

"They also demanded that

former President Suharto be taken to court on corruption charges," a staff member of the Indonesian Legal Aid Institute in the city told AFP. He said security forces were letting the protests go ahead.

In Padang, West Sumatra, some 600 students protested in front of the local military headquarters while another 400 occupied Tabing airport, waiting for local assembly speaker Nur Bachri Pamuncak, a resident said.

Pamuncak, who was to leave on a flight to Medan, North Sumatra, was held by students who gave him a petition demanding the legislature oust the military from politics and dismiss Wiranto.

Student rallies to air similar grievances were held in the South Sulawesi capital of Ujungpandang, Palu in Central Sulawesi, Pontianak in West Kalimantan and in Surabaya, East Java, offices of the Indonesian Legal Aid Institute said.

Ranariddh back for government talks

PHNOM PENH (R) — Deposed Cambodian co-Premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh returned to Phnom Penh Wednesday to begin working out the details of a new government with his former arch-rival, premier Hun Sen.

Ranariddh agreed last week to form a new coalition with Hun Sen, breaking more than three months of deadlock over Hun Sen's win in the contested July election.

Ranariddh said he was meeting with his top party officials later Wednesday to prepare for the beginning of talks the next day between his FUNCINPEC party and Hun Sen's ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP).

The two leaders agreed that as part of their coalition deal, the constitution would be amended to form a Senate.

Another key element of the accord was Hun Sen's approval of royal pardons for five of his opponents convicted of various security crimes, including two members of the royal family and two top generals loyal to Ranariddh.

"Today I will finalise... our draft, our proposals on, one, the political platform for the new government, second the bilateral relations between the parties and thirdly, about the Senate," Ranariddh told reporters upon his return from a brief private visit to Bangkok.

"Tomorrow the talks will begin on a bilateral basis between representatives from FUNCINPEC and representatives from the CPP," Ranariddh said he would meet Hun Sen next week.

The prince said he was still considering a proposal from Hun Sen on the division of government portfolios. Ranariddh said Hun Sen

had suggested the interior and defence ministries be shared by co-ministers from the two parties. FUNCINPEC would get the information and justice posts and the CPP the finance and foreign affairs portfolios. Other jobs would be shared out between them under the plan.

Ranariddh said the proposal was supported by his father, King Norodom Sihanouk, who helped broker last week's agreement.

Ranariddh said he thought the powers of the new Senate should be limited to scrutinising legislation passed by the lower house, the National Assembly.

Under last week's agreement, Ranariddh would become president, or speaker, of the National Assembly. The president of Hun Sen's CPP, Chea Sim, the speaker of the old assembly, would chair the new Senate.

Chea Sim also would serve as acting head of state when the king is abroad — a duty that formerly fell to the assembly president.

Ranariddh said his top military man, General Nhiek Bun Chhay, one of the five to be pardoned under the coalition agreement, would not be reinstated as deputy armed forces chief of staff, but his troops would be reintegrated into the government army.

Nhiek Bun Chhay sided with Ranariddh when Hun Sen ousted the prince in a bloody coup in July last year. He is based in an opposition enclave on the border with Thailand.

Ranariddh said opposition forces reintegrated quickly. He said he also wanted to see the speedy return of tens of thousands of refugees who fled to Thailand last year to escape factional fighting in the wake of Hun Sen's coup.

Malaysia, U.S. seek to limit differences over Gore comments

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Malaysian and U.S. officials sought Wednesday to limit a diplomatic furor set off by Vice President Al Gore's declaration of support for Malaysian dissidents.

Asked if he had made up with Gore during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad replied: "Made up? I don't know of any differences. I'm not aware of anything." U.S. officials also rejected suggestions that

Gore's comments had distracted the APEC summit from dealing with Asia's serious economic crisis.

During informal socialising during the summit, Gore and Mahathir chatted and smiled as they walked together.

Mahathir told reporters they did not discuss Gore's remarks and that "there's no change in relations between the U.S. and Malaysia."

The attempt at minimising the rift contrasted sharply with comments by Malaysian officials a day earlier and in local newspapers Wednesday.

Gore infuriated Malaysian leaders earlier in the week when he sympathised with the "brave people of Malaysia" who are part of a growing street protest movement that is calling for an end to Mahathir's 17-year rule.

Malaysia's trade minister, Rafidah Aziz, called the speech "the most disgusting... I've ever heard in my life."

Malaysian newspapers bristled with editorials condemning Gore. Many bad front-page stories highlighting criticism of Gore's remarks. "Al Gore" read the headline in The Star's story.

The New Straits Times carried nearly a dozen angry articles. "The world community is all too familiar with the U.S."

double standards in its self-appointed role of global supercop," the Times said in an editorial.

Noordin Sopiee, the head of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies, a think-tank, took out a full page advertisement in the newspaper calling Gore crass and ignorant.

"Mr. Gore should not only have left the meeting room immediately after insulting us. He should have got on the plane and left the country," it said.

A cartoon published by the New Straits Times showed Gore shouting "Democracy!" and then being asked by a bellhop to sign the bill for dozens of hotel rooms cancelled by the U.S. delegation after U.S. President Bill Clinton decided not to visit because of the Iraqi crisis.

Gore's remarks were prompted by the arrest of Mahathir's former deputy prime minister, Anwar Ibrahim, on Sept. 20, and his alleged beating while in police custody.

Anwar is standing trial on 10 charges of corruption and sexual misconduct, allegations he denies and calls trumped up to undermine his challenge to Mahathir.

The youth wing of Malaysia's governing coalition accused the United States Wednesday of trying to destabilise the government, and lodged a formal complaint at the U.S. Embassy.

"We cannot accept such a blatant insult to the Malaysian nation," said the complaint, signed by leaders of the five main youth divisions of the governing National Front coalition.

The note also objected to a meeting Sunday between U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Anwar's wife, Azizah Ismail.

Picasso 'Nude' sells for \$11 million; auction nets \$212 million

NEW YORK (AP) — A Pablo Picasso painting of his naked mistress in a landscape setting, which hung in the National Gallery of Art for a decade, sold for \$11 million, taking the total of a two-day Sotheby's art auction to \$212 million.

Another big hit at Tuesday's sale was a Richard Diebenkorn painting, which sold for \$4 million, double its pre-sale estimate and a record for the artist.

"Clearly, the success reflected the quality of the works offered," said Sotheby's senior vice president Matthew Weigman.

The Diebenkorn was simply a beautiful painting. The Picasso cubist masterpiece, "Nude," was the biggest sale of Tuesday evening. It depicts the

artist's mistress, Fernande Olivier, barely draped in a cloth and standing against a distant mountain range. It had been valued before the sale at \$10 million to \$15 million.

Diebenkorn's "Horizon-Ocean View," a bright yellow and blue landscape, was the last work from a Reader's Digest collection that was mostly auctioned Monday.

The auction house also sold pieces by Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg as part of a contemporary, modern and Impressionist art sale.

Johns' 1955 drawing "Flag" sold for \$992,500, a record auction price for one of his drawings. It had been estimated at up to \$700,000. The previous record for a Johns drawing was \$880,000.

The sales, part of a busy art auction season, came a day after Sotheby's sold the heart of one of the world's premier corporate art collections, amassed by Reader's Digest co-founder Lila Acheson Wallace. The 37 works, expected to sell for between \$70 million and \$100 million, went for \$94.5 million, including several works sold Tuesday.

At Tuesday's sale, 27 pieces came from the Morton G. Neumann family collection, which sold for \$17.6 million, in line with a pre-sale estimate of \$16 million to \$23 million.

Neumann, a Chicago industrialist, was a self-taught collector of fine art with his wife. He died a decade ago, and she died recently.

There were some disappointments Tuesday night. Johns' 1958 work "White Numbers," rows and columns of the numbers zero through nine in wax and oil, was expected to fetch up to \$9 million but failed to sell.

So did Jackson Pollock's 1950 painting "Fireworks," bursts of red, silver, yellow and green on a black background, which was estimated at up to \$2.5 million.

Of 246 Impressionist and modern works for auction earlier Tuesday, 70 failed to sell, and the rest brought in \$31.7 million. The 246 works had been expected to draw about \$39 million.

The Sotheby's sale prices include buyer's premiums — 15 per cent of the hammer price up to \$50,000 and 10 per cent thereafter. The identities of the buyers were not immediately available.

U.S. special envoy due back in S. Korea after crucial talks with North

SEOUL (AFP) — U.S. special envoy Charles Kartman was due back in South Korea Wednesday after crucial negotiations on opening Pyongyang's suspect underground facilities to nuclear inspectors, officials said.

Kartman was to return to Seoul late Wednesday on a special military flight from North Korea, ahead of U.S. President Bill Clinton's arrival here for a visit likely to be dominated by concerns over the North's nuclear programme.

He left Pyongyang earlier in the day after discussions with North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-Gwan about "outstanding issues" between the two nations.

Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency said.

The special envoy for Korean

affairs had been in the hermit state for three days of negotiations on winning access to underground sites which U.S. officials fear are being used to develop nuclear weapons.

But the North Korean news agency did not give any clue as to the talks agenda, nor whether progress had been made narrowing differences over the U.S. request for inspections.

And officials here were tight-lipped about his schedule, saying only that he would not be meeting the press during the remainder of his stay in Seoul. Some reports said he would travel to Tokyo Thursday to brief Clinton.

In Seoul, Kartman will brief Assistant Foreign Minister Choi Sung-Hong Thursday on his trip and will "exchange views on policy coor-

dination," South Korean officials said. The envoy held three rounds of talks with Kim Gye-Kwan, during which he "strongly demanded access to the underground facilities," an official here said.

Tensions between Washington and Pyongyang over the issue are mounting, prompting experts to warn that a new Korean nuclear crisis could erupt unless Washington wins the inspection access it requires to allay suspicions.

"We'll have to see how the United States will react, but my worry is that if Kartman fails to get North Korea's agreement for some sort of regular, wide-ranging inspections of the sites, we could see a major new crisis," said a diplomatic source who requested anonymity.

U.S. surveillance images spotted a new underground facility located near the centre of its supposedly frozen nuclear programme, shut down under a key 1994 accord which some U.S. officials say averted a possible conflict here.

The North has repeatedly said it will not allow access to the sites, but has also said that if the United States wants to inspect the area, it must pay "compensation" to Pyongyang for making "slandorous allegations" against it. U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has expressed "great concern" over the developments, while other officials have warned that North Korea's refusal to allow inspectors into the underground complex could threaten the 1994 accord between the two countries.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established in 1994. It is the first Arab newspaper to be published in English in Jordan.

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Web Site: http://www.access2arabia.com/jordantimes/

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times Advertising Department

Lack of trust hinders peace

THE ISRAELI decision, after the latest war of words with the Palestinians, to resume troop pullbacks in accordance with the Wye River accord and comply with the terms of the agreement is, of course, welcome news. That the treaty should have been derailed so easily is, however, ominous.

It is now eight years since the Oslo accords, and if anything, it is obvious that peace does not come easily. It seems, therefore, to be rather extreme on behalf of the Israeli leadership, not only to postpone the agreement on the back of certain remarks made by President Arafat, but to go as far as encourage settlers to graze land and build on it, as Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon did Monday.

Arafat's frustration must be understandable to an Israeli leadership which has done everything in its power to foster discontent within PNA-controlled areas, while at the same time making it increasingly difficult for the PNA to justify its tough measures against its own population. That Arafat must make concessions to public Palestinian opinion in the same way that Netanyahu must make concessions to his right-wing partners is only a part of the political game that is played on both sides. Reactions to such political game-play should then be suitably muted and even sympathetic.

The bottom-line is, and always was, how committed both parties, but mostly Israel, are to a secure and lasting peace. It is simply not good enough, nor dignified enough, to fly off the handle whenever a remark is made that does not suit this party or that. When peoples' lives and livelihoods are at stake, acting like children in a kindergarten is inexcusable.

The U.S. role in trying to promote peace and the pressure applied on both sides to maintain the momentum gained after Wye is telling and shows the importance Washington attaches to reaching a settlement. But President Clinton must also be aware of Arab perception of American double standards. If any transgression by Israel is merely met with a rap over the fingers, while others (lately Iraq) are confronted by the combined military might of both the U.S. and Britain, then perceptions of double standards will linger rather than any notion that the U.S. is committed to finding a fair solution. This too will hinder progress.

All sides must, publicly and privately, show absolute commitment and determination to go through with not just the Wye River accord, but any previous and subsequent agreements, to build a basis of trust from which to enter into final status talks.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Dustour's Mazen Saket commented on the reason behind the failure of the political parties in Jordan. Saket took as an example a workshop organised by the Jordan Centre for Research and Information on the issue. Saket said all participants agreed that the political parties in Jordan have failed. He argued against the suggestion, made by one participant, that poverty and unemployment are among the major reasons for this failure. Those exact problems should be the incentive for Jordanians to form political institutions that may lead to solutions to those problems. Saket charged that the most important reason is the slowing of the democratic process in the country, mostly due to the Gulf war, the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the peace treaty between the Palestinian National Authority, Israel and Jordan.

Al Rai's Fahed Fanek said any military action against Iraq would be indicative of a continuation of the genocide practised against the Arab people and proof of the double standards the world community adopts vis-a-vis Israel. The United States says it is trying to protect Iraq's neighbours, even if it is unsolicited, and claims it is acting in the name of the Security Council, yet does not wait for resolutions permitting it to do so, said Fanek. What is more hypocritical, said Fanek, is that Washington wants to eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction by using weapons of mass destruction. Clinton wants to make important decisions in order to restore his image after the Lewinsky affair, and Iraq is an easy target, alleged Fanek. If the U.S. strikes Iraq, Jordan's economy will be hurt, because Jordan takes its oil from Iraq for free, and the trade volume between the two countries is around 24 per cent. Americans should take Jordan's interests — Iraq's neighbour — into consideration.

View from Academia

On the benefits of peace

INCREASINGLY SINCE the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty in Wadi Araba four years ago, but more so recently, some (at times innocently, at times maliciously) have been raising questions regarding the benefits, or "rewards" (as they choose to call it), of peace for Jordan. What has Jordan gained since the signing of the said peace deal with Israel? The implied answer to this question — which is almost always posed rhetorically and sceptically — is that Jordan has either gained very little, or nothing at all. As if Jordan were so naive and gullible.

First of all, there is — be the intention behind raising the question well or ill — something remarkably false about the very question itself: What do we mean when we ask about the benefits of peace — in the case of Jordan or others in the region? The benefits or rewards of peace are — guess what? — peace itself. Peace means end of conflict, end of tension, end of human suffering, end of violence, end of insecurity and instability, end of time-wasting and of resources. Peace means living and letting live, the channelling and re-channelling of human efforts away from destruction to construction. Peace means the decision to resort to dialogue in solving problems, claiming rights and negotiating differences. Are not these rewards or benefits themselves sufficient? I believe that they are. Why some people choose to ignore them is beyond me.

Though I am not as old as some of my readers may think, I have witnessed first-hand one Arab-Israeli war and one unfortunate civil war. Even though I was a child in both, I was old enough to realise many of the implications, and witness many of the tragedies, of the two unfortunate events. And I have one word, and one word only, to describe both wars: ugly. I mean ugly, not in a perversely romantic or heroic way (as in the case of Hollywood movies which glorify and romanticise war while condemning it), but in a bitter, sickening and nauseating way (as in the case of a repulsive experience which you have been through and never want to even remember). The end to bad news, believe you me, is good news.

Secondly, however, the answer to the question about the rewards of peace to Jordan is self-evident, and all too obvious. It is an answer provided by no other than — guess? — Jordan, which itself knows what is best for it and which itself negotiated the terms of the agreement and witnessed its implementation. The Jordanian answer boils down to the simple fact that Jordan restored all (yes all) of its rights. It got its borders demarcated and internationally recognised, it got back its occupied territories, it

got back access to its water resources, etc. What is wrong with this? Should Jordan ask for something which is not its own? Since Egypt signed its bilateral historic agreement with Israel in 1977, it has become crystal clear that while the Arab brethren all support each other morally (what one may call moral collectivism), each Arab country opted, has been compelled, expected, called upon (call it what you wish) to negotiate its demands from Israel individually. Jordan acted upon this premise (that of bilateralism) whose foundation was laid in 1977. So where has Jordan gone wrong? Moreover, the cooperation agreements which Jordan signed with both Israel and the Palestinians are not to be disparaged in any way; if they do not bear immediate fruit at this point in time, they will in the future. Furthermore, Jordan is in a position now (i.e. that it is at least on speaking terms with Israel) to help other brethren whenever its help is called for. His Majesty intervened in Hebron, in the nick of time, and helped the Palestinians and Israelis reach an agreement; he intervened at Wye, in the nick of time also, and helped them reach another agreement.

Most, however, who raise sceptical questions about the value of peace with Israel have economics in mind. Economically, the argument goes, Jordan did not benefit much since the signing of the peace agreement with Israel. Well, the first thing that needs to be stressed here is that such an assumption may not be true at all. Suffice it to say, that prior to and following the peace agreement, Jordan did a lot of soul-searching, economically speaking, and a lot of assessment of its strengths and weaknesses. While dramatic economic results may not have happened (how can there be dramatic results for economies overnight?), much has happened by way of preparing for what is to come.

Economies cannot develop and thrive until and unless an environment congenial to economic growth and prosperity is created first. The years following the peace treaty with Israel have witnessed tremendous strides in this respect. Economic reform has become a priority for the country.

And much has happened at this level. The image (which many of the cynics, the sceptics and the hypocrites seem to be guilty of), that, upon the signing of peace with Israel, the Arab World will revel in milk and honey is at best a figment of the imagination. Milk and honey cannot be obtained easily.

But — more importantly — who says that economic rewards are a direct, automatic result of peace? One does assume, of course, that once war is over, countries of the Middle East will

embark on the process of economy building and development. But the cessation of hostilities and the signing of peace agreements do not necessarily create strong economies.

Economy building is a process which takes time. The creation of strong economies is, to a large extent, dependent on the creation of the congenial environment of economic reform plans just as it is for all countries in the region (excluding Israel, which is a peculiar case) is a developing country. It is also a limited resource. And it is a country which has obstacles and challenges, as well as the challenges it shares with other countries in the region and the Jordanian economy will not do well unless the impediments standing in the way (red tape, lack of planning, shortage of funds, absence of correct attitudes, etc.) are addressed and effectively tackled. Jordan has done a lot, positively, it has to wait some of its reform plans and investment projects begin to bear fruit. Jordan, however, is not a lone island in a vast ocean, a Middle Eastern country. Its own economy, as well as its environment, is unavoidably affected (and in a positive way) by the economies of its neighbours and the overall environment in the region.

I, like many, have heard it from more than one economic expert: unless the overall environment in the Middle East becomes conducive to investment and economic growth (and overall peace in the region appears to be a prerequisite), the economy of the country will not drastically change. Who would put millions or billions in any individual Middle Eastern country (Jordan included), if he/she feels that peace is far from complete in the region? Investors invest to gain more money, not to lose. Instability and investment do not go together. Unless peace is overall, I do not think we will see huge investments in the region. But those who speak of the benefits or rewards of peace step back and remember that the peace process is not over yet. If we believe that all countries in the region are inevitably affected by the overall Middle Eastern environment, and they all indeed are, then we cannot judge the effect of peace on the countries in the region unless and until peace is achieved. There is no peace, yet, in the Middle East today — i.e. full, firm, overall peace.

To the cynics and the sceptics, we therefore say: hold your horses; do not be guilty of confused premonitions. We Middle Easterners are less than half-way through with peacemaking.

M. KAHIL



Developing World

Riad al Khouri

Lahoud's new broom

THE INAUGURATION next week of General Emile Lahoud as Lebanon's new president is a cause for cheer. Not so much because the incumbent President Elias Hrawi did not do a good job — as he put it, when he took over, there was practically no country. The Hrawi regime's first few years were marked by more or less successful crisis management, followed by another few years of economic rebound. Unfortunately, for both internal and external reasons, the final Hrawi years were not happy ones economically. However, what we are looking at now is the possibility of a new broom that will clean up the Lebanese system and allow sustainable growth to take place.

The fact is that the new president will be coming in at a difficult time economically. This is not so much true for the country — though true it is — as for the world's emerging markets. The crises in East Asia and elsewhere have led to a drop in demand for oil and other raw materials sold by the Arab World.

This in turn has made it more difficult for the latter — Lebanon's best customer — to buy Lebanese goods and services or to invest in Lebanon. In addition, the Lebanese working in other Arab countries and sending money home will also be poorer.

Unfortunately, the current world crunch came just when Beirut was starting to attract the attention of international investors as an emerging market.

Meanwhile, sister markets in many other parts of the world were not so much emerging as submerging. The case of Malaysia is particularly sad: until the early summer of 1997, investing in Kuala Lumpur was the thing to do. A year or so later, the Malaysian economy is in the soup; the government has imposed draconian measures, including controls on foreign capital flows; and it is being stressed that Malaysia has no intention of removing these for the time being. As Kuala Lumpur's economic policymakers try to clamp down on the economy, they

may end up suffocating it instead.

Is there a lesson in this for Lebanon? Happily, the financial contagion that gripped Malaysia and some of its neighbours doesn't look like it will make it to Beirut. Nevertheless, even if Lebanon slumps in 1999, the new leadership should stay away from drastic economic and financial controls. This wouldn't normally be the sort of advice that the Lebanese need, but the combination of the rise of new rules internationally, which tend towards less economic freedom, with the coming to power of a new president who doesn't have roots in the private sector could be tricky. Now that the international conventional wisdom is no longer the pursuit of laissez-faire, it could be easier for a man like Lahoud to contemplate imposing controls in worsening economic times. Whatever other changes are introduced in the next few years, I hope that economic dirigisme is not one of them. If there is a bad slump in Lebanon soon, my advice to the new regime is to go as far as possible to preserve economic freedom. Without this, Beirut may become another Kuala Lumpur. Keeping a free economic system is in the long run the best guarantee for local and international investors in Lebanon.

Another pessimistic scenario for Lebanon could involve singing that Third World favourite, "The Debtor Blues." The same old lament is being heard these days in capitals as diverse as Moscow, Tegucigalpa, and Amman — to name but a few — as more economic policymakers in the poorer parts of the world bewail their countries' debtor status. Having borrowed too much and then inexorably mispent it, many economies are left saddled with massive debts. Though this has been the case for some time, the difference now is that the deflating global economy and shrinking export markets mean that these debtors will have a tougher job trying to get out of the trough. In the case of the Russians, Hondurans, Jordanians, and some others,

debt relief and aid are being demanded.

For Honduras, this may be understandable in view of the disastrous hurricane that struck the country recently. Without significant relief from debt, the damage wrought on some small Central American countries is going to be hard to handle economically. So Europeans and others have announced that the Hondurans would have their debts forgiven, and the U.S. has also come through with more aid.

Meanwhile, back in sunny Amman, no high winds are being reported. However, having failed to grow over the past few years, Jordan finds itself still unable to repay old debts, despite a lengthy period of IMF structural reform.

Jordanian diplomatic support of the Middle East peace process might mean a positive response to some requests for help with foreign debt. Nevertheless, despite some favourable signs here and there, the Kingdom's finances don't look good.

Could Lebanon be moving down a similar path? Lebanese growth prospects are weaker now than they have been since 1991, and simultaneously the country's external debt is starting to pile up. The danger now is that 1999 will see Lebanese economic policymakers trying to borrow their way out of a slump while corruption and economic mismanagement continue. As the examples of Jordan and others show, international borrowing without using funds effectively means that repayment is going to be difficult. The lesson for the new Lebanese president should thus be clear: as far as possible within the present free economic system, clean up the administration and don't indulge in more foreign borrowing. Otherwise, Lebanon will end up singing the same lament as emerging markets which are no longer emerging and sovereign debtors who are looking distinctly less sovereign.

Jerusalem

A haunting question

IN THE summer of 1993 I had the unique privilege of being the first Palestinian journalist to interview an Israeli prime minister. During the 'one hour exclusive' interview I was granted with Yitzhak Rabin I asked him a question that has been haunting me. At that time Israel had not recognised the PLO, the memorandum of understanding had not been signed and the Cairo and Taba agreements were not reached.

Now, after the Israeli government and Knesset has approved the Wye agreement the circle has been completed. Both the centre-left and the centre-right of the Israeli political map have come to terms with Palestinian nationalism and have recognised that there is no choice but to deal with the national representatives of the Palestinian people. Such a recognition ought to have produced its logical conclusion — namely a recognition of the national rights of Palestinians.

The question which haunted me in 1993, and still haunts me today, has to do with the Israeli perception of the future of the Palestinians. I asked Rabin what he envisioned as the future status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 15 years. The reason I asked this question is that I felt then, as I do till this day, that Israelis have not given this issue enough thought. Israeli papers might have a high percentage readership among its population. Think-tanks and strategic centres abound, the Knesset debates all kinds of issues and the press is free and open. But very few Israelis have given this issue much deep thought and analysis.

And I think that the sooner they do, the better for all of us in the region. To be sure, the choices are not limitless. Israel must agree to either share the power or share the land with Palestinians. For years the PLO Charter had preached the gospel of sharing the power. The secular democratic state that PLO leaders envisioned was aimed at forging ahead with a binational state for all its citizens. It is true that the PLO fumbled in explaining its goal. A key issue that the PLO never clearly answered was which Jews it wanted as citizens of this state. The Jews who were citizens of Israel at the time of the charter, or the Jews of 1948 or the Jews of the 20s and 30s.

But the PLO was never pushed to give an answer because Israel wanted a country as Jewish as France or Britain. A binational state was not acceptable to Israelis. It took the PLO until 1988 to give up on the sharing of power idea and adopt the sharing of land option. Palestinians of the initiative finally convinced the PLO leadership that this dream of sharing the power had to be dropped, because Israelis did not share it. And you can force another people to share your dream. On November 15, 1988 the Palestinian National Council accepted the U.N. partition plan by issuing a declaration of independence. The Palestinian Declaration of Independence looked for the creation of a binational state alongside Israel and not in its place.

This week, ten years later, the other half of Israel seems to have come grudgingly to the point of accepting that Israel can't keep its sanity and continue to control another people and their land by military force. When I asked Rabin about his vision of the future of the West Bank and Gaza, he brushed my question aside by saying something to the effect that his vision would be some type of entity connected to Jordan.

That Jordan option has failed. Both Labour and Likud have given up on it and of course Jordanians and Palestinians have never accepted that Israel should dictate their relationship. So we are back to square one. Palestinians know exactly what they want — to be free. What form this freedom is going to take is less important. Many Palestinians ask the Israelis for a simple answer — either marry us or divorce us. Meaning, either all Palestinians and Israelis become equal citizens of one democratic country or Palestine be allowed to exist alongside Israel. The third option would be the continuation of the existing apartheid situation. And this is not acceptable.

Now that the Wye River memorandum has become a legal document approved by the majority of the representatives of the state of Israel, the harder issues will have to be tackled. Permanent status talks can turn out to be easier if Israelis start giving thought to this question instead of continuing to bicker and make excuses.

Royal Highnesses Christiane to Tuesday at Basman Palace

...the first time we have been able to...

By Tim Radford

...the first time we have been able to...

OECD paints grim Asian outlook as recovery delayed

SINGAPORE (R) — The OECD has painted a grim picture of Asia's economic landscape, saying the deepening crisis had erased most prospects for growth until late 1999.

The once dynamic Asian economies (DAE) of Indonesia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Taiwan had almost all slipped into recession, the OECD said in its latest edition of its twice-yearly Economic Outlook.

The likelihood of a return to growth had deteriorated in the seven months since the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published its last report.

"The economic downturns in the DAE have deepened and become more widespread since the spring of this year," said the OECD, which groups 29 of the world's most advanced economies.

"Little if any recovery is expected before the second half of 1999," it added, slashing its forecasts for regional economies.

had expected growth by the year end in Malaysia, the Philippines, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Now it saw Malaysia, heralded for having earlier avoided the crisis, experiencing a 4.7 per cent contraction, Hong Kong contracting 4.5 per cent, the Philippines shrinking 0.5 per cent, and Singapore flat at zero growth.

Thailand could expect its economy to contract by 7.0 per cent in 1998, while Indonesia, where the social and political turmoil of last spring has accentuated the severe contraction already underway, would shrink 15.5 per cent.

Indonesia has become the focus of the regional crisis with economic decline driving social and political turmoil.

President Subarto stepped down after 32 years of rule in May, followed by the uneasy ascendance of his former deputy, B.J. Habibie.

China's economy — forecast to expand by 7.6 per cent against 8.8 per cent a year ago — had worryingly

slowed more than anticipated despite easing of fiscal and monetary policy and the government's programme of structural economic reform.

"The financial crisis of other Asian countries which shared similar structural problems with China has raised concerns that its current strains could develop into something considerably worse," the report said.

Only Taiwan remained robust, although the 4.5 per cent growth predicted is well below the 6.8 per cent achieved in 1997.

The interdependence of the former Tiger economies, once a source of strength, had subsequently exacerbated their decline, demonstrated by the effects of the region-wide import collapse.

By the end of 1999, most DAE economies could expect to see only a fraction of their traditional growth rates, the OECD said.

Singapore would expand by 0.5 per cent, Hong Kong by 1.5 per cent and Taiwan by 4.0 per cent, with Malaysia and Indonesia contracting by 0.5 per cent and 3.0 per cent respectively.

Thailand had a good chance of growing by 2.0 per cent if private sector debt deals succeeded in creating a virtuous circle where profits and liquidity recover, generating resources to make further progress on debt repayment to crippled domestic lenders.

The timing and sustainability of regional recovery was dependent on three factors, the OECD said:

— stabilisation of external financial conditions to allow interest rate policy to support expansion

— bank and corporate restructuring

— rebuilding of confidence.

Macroeconomics offered some scope for manoeuvre as inflation pressures had been mostly contained, despite some countries seeing their currency depreciate by as much as 80 per cent against the U.S. dollar since the start of the crisis in July 1997.

This would allow monetary stimulus once exchange rate pressure abated, relieving the pain of interest rates sent soaring to combat the currency collapse and exacerbating a credit crunch sparked by huge bad debts on banks' books.

Reasonably low government deficits relative to gross domestic product (GDP) also raised the prospect of fiscal measures to cushion the downturn, stimulate recovery and boost confidence.

But that confidence could prove elusive.

"Financial conditions in the region remain unsettled, with new tensions emanating from risks of renewed contagion from developments elsewhere," the report said.

It said moves to deal with financial market speculation, like Malaysia's sweeping capital controls, raised investors' fears that "the imposition of further controls will add to risk premia and make regional markets even more vulnerable to shocks."

"In Asia, where the crisis is now more than a year old, the key requirement is to lay the basis for recovery by implementing structural reforms needed to facilitate financial restructuring and to rebuild confidence," the OECD report said.

AFM's general price index fall below 160 level

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — The Amman Financial Market's (AFM) price index slipped below the 160 point level on Wednesday, as a result of decline in share prices of the major firms, a broker said Wednesday.

The AFM's daily bulletin indicated that the price index stood at 159.4 points, the lowest during the past 18 months.

Naim Nageeb, a broker, said the decline was due to the drop in the prices of the Arab Bank and Jordan Phosphate Mines Company over the past two days.

"The investors showed very little interest in the market because of the long holiday which left only two days of trading. Many of them are still on vacation," Nageeb told the Jordan Times.

The broker was referring to the three-day holiday earlier this week on the occasion of His Majesty's birthday and Al Isra' Wal Miraj anniversary.

"I believe that things will improve a little bit on Saturday. If no positive changes occur, share prices will remain at current level," Nageeb added.

The stock market's turnover amounted to

JD2.6 million the bulk of which was recorded by the Arab Bank.

Arab Bank, the stock market's major blue chip, closed at JD204 in the past two days, JD1 below its previous level recorded in the past week, with a turnover of JD2.4 million.

The Housing Bank ranked second with a turnover of JD54,412 followed by the Arab Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Company, which registered a JD19,995 turnover. The share of the parallel market amounted to JD35,514, the bulletin showed.

Meanwhile, the sale of 33 per cent of the government's share in the Jordan Cement Factories Company is expected to officially take place on Saturday when the French company Lafarge is scheduled to pay JD71 million for 20 million shares at the rate of JD3.600.

Nageeb said the sale, which was concluded last month, will take place on the AFM amid strong expectations that the sale will raise the company's shares.

The deal is in line with the privatisation process the government is undergoing as part of the Economic Readjustment Programme.

Saifi fails to unseat Murad as head of commerce body

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — Haidar Murad, the current chairman of the Amman Chamber of Commerce (ACC), maintained his grip on the presidency of the chamber following his slim victory over his rival Riyad Saifi.

Final results of the chamber indicated that Murad won 4,601 votes compared to 4,345 for Saifi. Murad's block, Al Wifaq [Accord], won seven seats out of the 12 seats that constitute the chamber's board of directors.

Despite his defeat, Saifi and four others of his block, the Ta'awun [cooperation], will become members of the new board that will represent more than 30,000 merchants for the coming four years.

None of the four candidates who ran as independents won the election which registered a turnout of 7,683 members, or 25.8 per cent of the total number eligible to vote. In the 1994 elections, the turnout was 30 per cent.

The current members of the board who retained their seats are: Haidar Murad, Riyad Saifi, Mohammad Mubtasib,

Exchange Rates		Wednesday, 18-11-98									
CURRENCY	JORDAN DOLLAR	SAUDI RIAL	U.S. DOLLAR	EURO	SWISS FRANC	GERMAN MARK	FRANCE FRANC	ITALY LIRA	NETHERLAND GILDER	SPAIN PESA	UNITED KINGDOM POUND
JORDAN DINAR	1.0000	0.1888	0.1927	1.8778	1.8380	0.1844	2.3389	0.2078	0.7060		
SAUDI RIAL	5.2767	1.0000	1.0211	8.9483	9.7421	1.0300	12.9957	1.0999	3.7501		
U.S. DOLLAR	5.1881	0.9793	1.0000	8.7427	9.5408	1.0000	12.1386	1.0772	3.6722		
EURO	0.5329	0.1025	0.1026	1.0000	0.9783	0.1026	1.2499	0.1106	0.3760		
SWISS FRANC	0.5438	0.1026	0.1048	1.0212	1.0000	0.1057	1.2724	0.1129	0.3919		
GERMAN MARK	5.1435	0.9709	0.9914	8.5589	9.4587	1.0000	12.0352	1.0678	3.6419		
FRANCE FRANC	0.4274	0.0807	0.0824	0.8026	0.7859	0.0831	1.0000	0.0887	0.3032		
ITALY LIRA	4.8164	0.9082	0.9283	9.0446	8.8571	0.9364	11.2697	1.0000	3.4103		
NETHERLAND GILDER	21.4831	0.4052	0.4108	40.3427	39.5065	0.4167	50.2677	0.4804	15.7500		
SPAIN PESA	1.4124	0.2696	0.2722	2.8824	2.8974	0.2746	3.3048	0.2832	1.0000		
UNITED KINGDOM POUND	0.8440	0.1593	0.1627	1.5850	1.5522	0.1641	1.9750	0.1752	0.5871		
GERMAN MARK	2.3644	0.4483	0.4557	4.4401	4.3481	0.4587	5.5324	0.4909	1.6747		
FRANCE FRANC	1.9448	0.3671	0.3749	3.8523	3.7786	0.3781	4.5509	0.4038	1.3770		
ITALY LIRA	7.9273	1.4964	1.5280	14.8885	14.5779	1.5412	18.4488	1.6489	5.6125		
NETHERLAND GILDER	1.7157	0.3239	0.3307	3.2218	3.1561	0.3336	4.0148	0.3862	1.2741		
SPAIN PESA	2.6844	0.5029	0.5136	5.0841	4.9897	0.5187	6.3044	0.5822	1.9894		
UNITED KINGDOM POUND	11.3178	2.1364	2.1815	21.5336	20.8130	2.2054	28.4822	2.3489	8.0133		
GERMAN MARK	23.4041	4.4179	4.5111	43.3502	43.0382	4.5502	54.7627	4.9553	16.5701		
FRANCE FRANC	48.7712	9.2963	9.4005	81.5887	80.6883	9.4821	114.1188	10.1261	34.3300		
ITALY LIRA	2.2303	0.4210	0.4289	4.1882	4.1014	0.4336	5.2186	0.4831	1.5750		
NETHERLAND GILDER	3.8728	0.7499	0.7651	7.4001	7.3055	0.7724	8.2954	0.8248	2.9126		
SPAIN PESA	2.8712	0.5433	0.5548	5.4050	5.2930	0.5586	6.7347	0.5978	2.0038		
UNITED KINGDOM POUND	18.6328	3.1387	3.2059	31.2844	30.5870	3.2337	38.8188	3.4534	11.7787		
GERMAN MARK	2.1850	0.4125	0.4212	4.1032	4.0182	0.4248	5.1127	0.4637	1.5493		
FRANCE FRANC	1.2007	0.2267	0.2314	2.2548	2.2081	0.2334	2.8098	0.2493	0.8300		

MAJOR CURRENCIES AGAINST JORDAN DINAR

CENTRAL BANK BULLETIN

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DEPOSIT INTEREST RATES

CBLA

CURRENCY	1 M	3 M	6 M	1 YEAR
US DOLLAR	5.2368	5.2199	4.9709	4.7593
GERMAN MARK	7.3756	7.1750	6.9000	6.6500
FRANCE FRANC	1.0000	1.2563	1.3084	1.4166
GERMAN MARK	3.5000	3.5967	3.5563	3.5000
SWITZERLAND FRANC	3.5000	3.5703	3.5410	3.5003
JAPAN YEN	0.3552	0.4034	0.4326	0.4552

CURRENCY	ASK	BID
US DOLLAR	0.7009	0.7005
GERMAN MARK	1.1657	1.1618
GERMAN MARK	0.4263	0.4261
FRANCE FRANC	0.5123	0.5079
FRANCE FRANC	0.1256	0.1272
JAPAN YEN	0.9529	0.9569
HOLLAND GILDER	0.3784	0.3780
ITALY LIRA	0.0429	0.0371
EURO	0.8328	0.8325

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

STOCK MARKET	INDEX	CLOSING	LAST CLOSE	CHANGE
FRANKFURT	DAX	4702.63	4763.77	-61.14
HONG KONG	HANG SENG	10145.99	10206.09	-1149.40
LONDON	FT-100	5552.70	5515.50	-7.80
NEW YORK	DJ INDUCL	6366.29	6319.35	-56.69
NEW YORK	NYSE COMPOSITE	581.82	586.30	-5.19
NEW YORK	NYSE COMPOSITE	581.82	586.30	-1.47
NEW YORK	S-P 500	1130.32	1125.72	13.60
TOKYO	NIKKEI 225	14560.29	14411.00	186.23
PARIS	CAC 40	3601.57	3621.85	-20.28
FRANKFURT	COMINDEX	4439.10	4383.80	55.60

PRECIOUS METALS

METAL	ASK	BID
GOLD	294.20	292.00
SILVER	4.94	4.96
PLATINUM	350.50	352.00

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

German-Jordanian Chamber partnership project presents programme for 1999

THE AMMAN Chamber of Industry (ACI) and the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (DIHT) are concluding two years of successful cooperation. Both partners continue into 1999 with major events for participation and the benefit of Jordanian industries. The joint activities are co-financed by the Ministry of Economic Cooperation (BMZ) and administered by the Economic and Qualification Development Foundation of German Business Institutions (SEQUA).

ACI will organise for the first time a Jordanian participation at the Contracting Exhibition in Leipzig in February 1999 to promote production cooperation with European and Jordanian garments and textile producers. During the exhibition a technological workshop and a presentation of cooperation potentials in the Middle East organised by the German Chambers in the Middle East is programmed. In the framework the German EU presidency, in the first six months of 1999, ACI and DIHT are launching a Euro-Fitness-Programme for the industry with a focus on foreign trade know-how and capabilities, on environmental management aspects of industrial operations and on management skills for the industry.

DIHT is planning for a new Middle East-German Business Conference in a Middle East country in 1999, inviting ACI to organise a Jordanian business delegation. Also in February 1999, for the first time Jordan will be represented through the partners' initiative at two major meetings of the DIHT and the German Chambers abroad in East Germany, Leipzig and Weimer. DIHT's Foreign Trade Days are well-established meeting places for the international business community to get acquainted with East German business partners. The DIHT headquarters will also move to Berlin during the coming year celebrating in November 1999.

After successful support of the Computer and Information Department of the ACI, which is the focal point of the Jordanian industry in the National Information System and the Jordanian E-commerce-Centre in the information technology nodes of the Euro-Mediterranean region supported by the EU-Esprit programme, 1999 will see intensive information and support for the industry in the field of Internet and virtual business. Another focus of DIHT-ACI cooperation is the environmental and technological support of the industry. The revitalised ACI-Environmental Department will provide intensive support to the new and potential environmental business sector in Jordan. ACI will organise a mission to the most important waste disposal fair in Germany in 1999. Furthermore, the Industrial Department will start an intensive management training programme.

Jordanian businessmen participated in two major regional business conferences in Hamburg in 1996 and 1998 organised by the DIHT and the German Chamber network in the countries of the Middle East. In summer 1998, a Jordanian delegation of the garments industries went for a fact-finding mission to the Contracting Fair in Leipzig.

Murad wins elections

(Continued from page 8)

Nafidh Elayan, Yanal Boustani, Yousif Suradi, Hisham Al Haj Hassan and Salim Khirfan.

The new members are: Fathi Sughayer, Nayif Ghath, Nayif Qasrawi and Hani Khalili.

Observers expected the new board to hold its first meeting by next week when they will elect a new chairman, two deputies for him, a rapporteur and a treasurer. They said Boustani has a good chance to become Murad's first deputy and Khirfan as the second

deputy. Mohtasib is expected to retain his previous post as the board's rapporteur. The elections, held under the supervision of Amman Governor Talat Nawayseh, ended late Tuesday and the results were announced early Wednesday.

IFC to fund private Syrian projects

(Continued from page 8)

Minister Khaled Mahayni. "We discussed the restoration of the IFC's activities in Syria and the contribution which we could provide to finance some projects here after Syria settled its debt problems with the World Bank," Khalil said.

The IFC is the World Bank's investment arm. Khalil said his visit to Damascus, which follows one by World Bank President James Wolfensohn in May, was aimed at negotiating with a number of Syrian businessmen and investors projects which they plan to build.

Khalil said talks were still at a preliminary stage and that no decision on projects or financial commitments had been made.

The IFC suspended its operations in Syria in 1985, when it was negotiating a contribution to the financing of a hotel, because of arrears problems

between Syria and the World Bank.

Syria signed a deal with the World Bank in July 1997 according to which it agreed to repay arrears amounting to \$526.4 million. It has been paying monthly installments of \$6.1 million per month since September 1997, officials said.

Wolfensohn met President Hafez Al Assad and senior economic officials during his May visit and said the IFC was ready to discuss ways of contributing to the financing of projects in Syria.

Khalil said that to his knowledge Syria was still abiding by its July 1997 agreement.

"I discussed with the finance minister the restoration of the IFC's activities in Syria. We talked about the possibility of helping some productive projects in the private sector, especially those... (in) the textile and tourism industries," Khalil said.

"We are putting emphasis on projects which could direct

their products for export," he added.

Khalil said the IFC's loans go directly to the private sector and that no guarantees were required from government.

"Our loans cover 25 per cent of the project's capital and we use the project itself as a guarantee. We can also encourage other financial institutions and commercial banks to help finance projects if we are convinced with their feasibility," he said.

The IFC official did not comment on whether the current economic reforms in Syria were enough to facilitate the flow of foreign investment into the country.

"The government has adopted good steps. Some other steps might be required according to the nature of each project. This might take some time," Khalil said.

"We consider our presence here and the encouragement of authorities to resume our activities as a positive sign," he said.

JORDANIAN NAMED FIRST RADISSON SAS MIDEAST 'LOOK TO BOOK' ELITE MEMBER

JORDANIAN TRAVEL agent Nassim Majdalawi has become the Middle East's first Radisson SAS 'Look To Book' Elite member.

To become an Elite member, Majdalawi, 25, owner of Amman's International Corporate Business Bureau, has registered over 80,000 'Look To Book' points through the Radisson SAS CRSGDS on-line travel agent incentive pro-

gramme. Points are exchanged for travel and gift vouchers.

"Majdalawi, the first of more than 200 regional travel agents to reach this mark, has, so far, generated over US\$8,000 of business for Radisson SAS hotels in Amman, Aqaba, London, Moscow, Helsinki and Stockholm," said Theo Oels, the Radisson SAS dedicated GDS systems trainer. 'Look To Book' has distin-

guished the Radisson brand in the travel industry.

"Its popularity has mushroomed since its launch ten months ago because of on-line accessibility; travel agents don't have to bother with coupons or vouchers and they don't get hassle but rewards," said Christian Flederer, Regional Director Sales and Marketing Middle East, Radisson SAS Hotels Worldwide.

A.F.M. TRADE Wednesday, 18-11-98 ACCESS 4646868

Company	Open	Close	Change
BANKS			
AB	204.000	204.000	0.00%
JIB	1.510	1.520	+0.66%
BOJ	1.080	1.070	-0.93%
MEIB	0.970	0.970	0.00%
IDB	1.420	1.420	0.00%
IB	2.880	2.700	-0.37%
IKB	1.680	1.680	0.00%
JGB	0.880	0.890	+1.47%
AJB	2.100	2.170	+3.33%
JIB	1.520	1.540	+1.32%
PB	0.980	0.970	-1.72%
BANKS INDEX	267.920		point = +0.08%
INSURANCE			
JFI	2.720	2.720	0.00%
INSURANCE INDEX	125.810		point = 0.00%
SERVICES			
JEPCO	1.420	1.420	0.00%
JTC	0.960	0.960	0.00%
AL RA	0.910	0.910	0.00%
AZE	0.810	0.810	0.00%
AFIE	1.880	1.880	0.00%
UDL	1.070	1.080	+0.93%
SERVICES INDEX	101.900		point = +0.08%
INDUSTRY			
ATTANQEEP	1.100	1.100	0.00%
JPMC	1.080	1.080	0.00%
JPRC	10.250	10.200	-0.49%
APMC	2.500	2.510	+0.40%
JCI	1.020	1.020	0.00%
ITCC	1.100	1.100	0.00%
JPC	1.840	2.040	+5.15%
DAR AL DAWA	5.100	4.970	-2.55%
MECEE	0.520	0.530	+1.92%
IS	0.850	0.850	0.00%
JAL	1.870	1.850	-1.20%
IFCI	0.290	0.290	0.00%
UCI	1.000	0.990	-1.00%
NCVWC	0.640	0.640	0.00%
JSC	0.340	0.340	0.00%
ACCPC	1.150	1.160	+0.87%
EL ZAY	1.100	1.070	-2.73%
UMI	0.590	0.590	0.00%
JIR	0.380	0.370	-2.63%
IS	0.590	0.590	0.00%
INDL	0.620	0.670	+8.06%
INDUSTRY INDEX	68.560		-0.13%
PARALLEL			
ZEFB 75	0.800	0.800	0.00%
JTF	0.350	0.360	+0.00%
UTCI	0.770	0.740	-3.90%
AL EKBAL	0.580	0.610	+5.35%
API	0.740	0.740	0.00%
DAWLIYAH	0.530	0.530	0.00%
ADIT	0.560	0.560	0.00%
OPTICAL HEARING	0.200	0.200	0.00%
READY MIX	0.320	0.330	+3.13%
NAMICO	0.760	0.790	+3.95%
MEPC 90	0.230	0.240	+4.35%
UTCI	0.490	0.500	+2.04%
UCI	2.200	2.260	+2.73%
UEI	0.210	0.210	0.00%
TH	0.140	0.140	0.00%
PEARL	0.280	0.280	0.00%
ASP	3.400	3.500	+2.94%
GRAND INDEX	159.46		+0.03%

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) The moon's going into Sagittarius today, Venus is already there, and the sun will be there Sunday. This is in your solar ninth house of travel, so that's what you should be planning. It'll be complicated this weekend, but if you make your plans or even start your trip now, you'll be well past the difficulty by the time conditions change.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Watch out for complications today. It looks like the plans you've laid are going to be shifted around a little. Well, it's more like explosion. Be ready for just about anything, because just about anything could happen. Your problem, or perhaps the solution to your problem, is in communications. Keep that in mind and you'll do fine.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) There's quite a clump of planets in Sagittarius, and you're probably noticing the difference. Sagittarius is a free-wheeling and independent sign, directly across the zodiac from Gemini. You and Sagittarius stir each other up and get each other going. Take care you don't get in trouble, by staying out too late on your lunch hour.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) This is a good time to make decisions concerning projects you and your loved ones want to work on together. That's because we've got love, children and work all in the same area of the chart, getting positive vibes right now. Your intuition is strong, and that's helpful if you're making big decisions, which you ought to be doing.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) There will be a strong compulsion for people to talk about things, possibly things they haven't talked about in years. For you, this will likely appear in your relationships with children, and with the people you love best. Devote as much time as you can to listening. You're a strong leader, but you'll lead better if you know how these people feel.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You're in the mood to clean things up around your place, and possibly do some decorating. You might have to tip things apart to get everything just right. The overall result will be good, but right now, things might look worse than they did before. Don't worry. As you know, you have to break the eggs to make the omelette.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) The moon has gone into Sagittarius, and the sun will be there at the end of this week. Sagittarius, for you, means education. It's also a sign you find fascinating, and today, you'll get a taste of what's to come. There should be some very interesting discussions out there. Don't be embarrassed if you can't quite keep up. You're learning fast.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) If you've been thinking about asking for a raise, this is the day to do it. It'll be easy to find the right words, and there are several things going in your favour. One is a tough job you've recently done. You made it look easy, and others noticed. They might already be thinking about giving you more money!

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) The moon, Venus, Pluto and Mercury are all in your sign, giving you wit and quick timing, passion and compassion. You're fast on your feet, and with your mind, so you can outmanoeuvre just about any adversary. Go ahead and make a run for it, wherever that means for you. You're not only fast, you're also lucky.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You've got an interesting dilemma today. You don't really feel like you can talk about it yet, and you're right. There may be some rumours going around, but for you, discretion is the better part of valour. Keep most of what you know to yourself until you find out the rest of what you don't know.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) The moon's going into Sagittarius today. This has a relaxing influence on you. You're plowing forward, but it's not as tough as it was. Neither you nor the person in control are taking yourselves quite as seriously as you were. By now, you've accomplished the major part of what you were trying to do.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Looks like a person in authority has some sort of weird scheme in mind for you, but it's not completely figured out. That's where you come in. Help this person figure out how to accomplish what he or she has in mind, and you'll become a valuable part of team.

Birth Stone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye

JORDAN TIMES
TEL: 5684311-5699634

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Your ideas are starting to emerge triumphant. It's almost like Judgement Day is coming. As an Aries, of course you take a firm stand for liberty and justice, and you're about to be vindicated in ways that you could never have done all by yourself. The universe is on your side, and it's about to become obvious.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) There are rumours going around. They're all the truth from somebody's perspective, but which one really is true? You get to help sort that out, and, of course, you have your own agenda, too. It doesn't look good for any kind of surreptitious activity. If you had planned any sort of covert manoeuvre, forget it.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You might be gathering more information now than you know what to do with. Some of it might not seem to make any sense. That's because the truth isn't always the same as the facts. Keep looking for the facts by gathering up as many people's truths as you can, and you'll see. Eventually it will sort itself out.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) The sun is almost into Sagittarius. Venus, Pluto, the moon and Mercury are there too, in your solar sixth house, indicating health and service to others. Since Cancer's the sign of the chef,

maybe, you'll be cooking during the upcoming holidays. Why not take advantage of conditions of conditions and plan a menu that's health oriented?

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) There's a lot of talking going on. People want to clear the air. Perhaps you can put work on hold for a while and take care of these other more personal matters. You're in a good position to deal with some of the emerging problems, so make time to do it now. It'll be more difficult, the longer you wait.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Mercury, your ruling planet, is in Sagittarius, inspiring you to mess around with things at home. It's going retrograde tomorrow. That tends to push us back to something we've done before, or to complete old business. Right now, however, Mercury's direct. You can still start something new today. But hurry.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) The emphasis is on education again. You're either teaching, learning or — knowing you —

information, and that's certainly going to be the case today. Pay attention, though, so you don't make mistakes.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Money looks good today. If you can find it, you can have it. It's almost like searching for buried treasure. In fact, it may literally be that. Do the digging, and you could be richly rewarded. The biggest barrier to your success is the possibility of getting distracted by love. That doesn't sound too bad either, does it?

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Mercury is going retrograde in your sign tomorrow. If you want to start new projects, you'd better get going now, especially concerning your career. A request for a promotion or raise is much more likely to go through today than tomorrow. Don't wait. Make your case; the odds are good you'll get what you want.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) It'll be hard to keep a secret today. Everybody else is buzzing with the latest news. Don't get involved. The cards are not all on the table yet. Somebody's holding something back. You can help them spill the beans by asking leading questions. That's your best plan for the day.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You're just about to get sprung free, and you really are looking forward to this weekend. Looks like what you've been doing has been working. Even if it hasn't turned out exactly as planned, at least you're getting through it and on what's coming next. And that's a party, starting tomorrow.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) An older person simply doesn't understand what you're talking about. You have to say it over and over again, as clearly as you can, until all of a sudden, ta da! Learning takes place! That's the moment every teacher waits for. Be persistent. This is going to be a tough nut to crack, especially if the person outranks you.

Birth Stone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye

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LOCAL SPORTS SCENE



Work begins on new facilities

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah, head of the Pan-Arab Games Higher Committee, Wednesday laid the foundation stone for the multi-purpose indoor stadium and the Olympic swimming pool, two key venues for the Aug. 15-31, 1999 Games.

JBF to host qualifiers

AMMAN — The Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF) will host the Asian Club Championship qualifiers which will be held next March, under the auspices of the West Asia Federation. Meanwhile, the national men's team has resumed training after it stopped last month following the JBF's resignation which was rejected by Minister of Culture and Youth Talal Sata'an Hassan. The JBF has appointed Ghalib Bal'awi as JBF director.

Taekwondo team leaves for Taiwan

AMMAN — The Jordan taekwondo national team has left for Taiwan to hold a two-week training camp as part of preparations for participation in the 31st Asian Games which will be held in Bangkok Dec. 6-20.

Maintenance begins at sports city

AMMAN — Director of Irbid's Al Hassan Sport City said maintenance work has started recently to prepare the complex to host some of the events of the Aug. 15-31 1999 Pan-Arab Games next summer.

PSD director receives police team

AMMAN — Public Security Department Director General Lt. Nasouh Muhieddin honoured the Police Sport Federation team for achieving the 13th place among 33 countries at the World Police Games which were held in Dubai Nov. 4-12.

Compiled by Ahmad Khatib

Pan-Arab Games committee meets Prince Hassan, promises to seek additional funding

3 sports cities, 25 facilities ready to host events

By Ahmad Khatib
and Aileen Bannayan

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Wednesday met with the delegation of the 9th Pan-Arab Games Ministerial Committee to examine Jordan's preparations for the Aug. 15-31, 1999 event, which will be held in Amman.

The Regent praised the committee's efforts and stressed that the Kingdom will provide all the support to ensure the success of the Games, which, he said, will be a tournament for all Arabs.

Minister of Culture and Youth Talal Sata'an Al Hassan said 25 sport facilities, including three sport cities, have been finalised to host the Games which will include 27 events for men and 19 for

women.

The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Al Khatib, Games Director Isam Aridah, head of the committee Sheikh Isa Ben Rashid Al Khalifah, Egypt's Minister of Higher Education Mufeed Shihab, officials from the Arab League including Assistant Secretary General Sweidan Daw and Youth and Sports Department Director Hani Mustafa.

Earlier in the day, the delegation met with Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Justice Jawdat Sbouh who said such a gathering of Arab youth "was bound to strengthen ties between Arab countries and increase cooperation among them."

Committee officials underlined their support for the Amman

Games, saying that they would recommend to the Arab League that Jordan receives additional funding and assistance.

"The Games are sure to be a success. What we have seen so far is very reassuring," Sheikh Isa said following the meeting.

More than 15 Arab countries and over 3,000 athletes and officials are expected to participate in the Games. Gearing up the country's facilities to accommodate and organise the mega event will prove to be a big challenge, officials have said.

Since the Arab Sports Federation (ASF) advanced the date of the upcoming games to 1999 instead of 2001, the Council of Arab Sports Ministers increased aid to the Kingdom to enable it to prepare infrastructure and update

sports facilities.

Aid from the Arab League has been raised to \$200,000 while the Council of Arab Ministers will grant \$1 million instead of \$700,000.

Additional sponsorship for Jordan's bid will be garnered through lowering the 50 per cent ASF margin of profit on promotion and television coverage.

The Jordanian government will cover the remaining costs, expected to reach JD18 million covering the construction of a multi-purpose indoor stadium with a capacity for 7,000 spectators; an Olympic-size swimming pool; a track and field stadium, in addition to acquiring and upgrading facilities with electronic timing machines and other needs.

The rest of the venues will be

utilised at private universities and educational institutions that have already expressed readiness to host some of the events.

Lebanon, which hosted the 8th Pan-Arab Games last summer, received \$28 million from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to help in construction of sport facilities destroyed during the civil war.

The Amman Games will be followed by the first Arab Paralympics.

The Pan-Arab Games have only been held eight times: Alexandria in 1953, Beirut 1957, Casablanca 1961, Cairo 1965, Damascus 1976, Morocco 1985, Damascus 1992 and Beirut 1997.

Brazil leads FIFA rankings

PARIS (AFP) — Latest FIFA rankings published Wednesday:

1. Brazil	73.59 pts
2. France	68.89
3. Germany	67.07
4. Croatia	66.75
5. Argentina	66.22
6. Czech Republic	64.37
7. Yugoslavia	64.34
8. Italy	64.29
9. Netherlands	62.41
10. Mexico	62.27

Graf continues impressive form

NEW YORK (AFP) — Steffi Graf made a triumphant return to Madison Square Garden Tuesday, taking advantage of an ailing Jana Novotna to reach the second round of the \$2 million Chase Championships.

Graf, a former World No. 1 and five-time winner of the WTA Tour's season finale, eliminated the defending champion and third seed 6-7 (5/7), 6-4, 6-1, to the delight of the New York fans.

Another former No. 1 player joined Graf in the quarter-finals earlier Tuesday as Switzerland's Martina Hingis rallied for a 4-6, 6-0, 6-3 triumph over countrywoman and Fed Cup teammate Patty Schnyder.

"I am happy that I got over this match today," said Graf. "I could be happier because I don't think I played up to my potential. But I think it is important to win the matches that you don't play so well and I think that it what I did today."

Novotna was bothered by cramping in her left leg and received medical treatment in the opening game of the third set.

"It was pretty obvious toward the end of the second set I got cramps and the fact that both my legs were affected, I knew it was going to be hard to continue," said Novotna. "I didn't have the same feeling in my



Natalie Tauziat

legs like I have and it was pretty frustrating, because I think I played pretty well."

The Czech managed to hold serve and had two break points in the next game, but was unable to capitalise and never won another game.

Competing in only her 13th tournament of the year due to various injuries, Graf said that being fresher at this point of the season is an advantage.

"I have been wearing down some players even

though I haven't really played that much and I think that speaks for itself," said Graf. "Some of the players have had a long season and I guess I have a little more excitement getting into these tournaments and playing. I think that shows a little bit."

Graf continued her dominance of Novotna as she improved to 28-4 all-time, including 17 of the last 18 meetings. Graf, 29, entered New York having won back-to-back tournaments in

Liepzig and Philadelphia, will face the winner of Wednesday's match between fifth seed Monica Seles and Russian teenager Anna Kournikova.

After losing her serve twice in dropping the first set, Hingis, the second seed, stormed through the second set in 17 minutes.

Schnyder went up a break in the second game of the final set, but Hingis broke right back in the next game.

The turning point came in the fourth game, when Hingis trailed 0-40 after a long rally that ended when she hit a backhand wide. The exchange had Schnyder bending over and gasping for air, and Hingis saved all three break points and eventually took the game with an ace.

Hingis proceeded to break a fatigued Schnyder in the next game to go up 3-2 and broke Schnyder at love in the ninth game, winning the match when Schnyder hit a backhand into the net.

Eighth seed Natalie Tauziat, runner up to Novotna at Wimbledon, beat Natasha Zvereva of Belarus 6-3, 6-1 in a lackluster daytime match.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Kopke's move cancelled

LONDON (AFP) — Andreas Kopke's free transfer from French league leaders Marseille to Scottish Premier giants Rangers has been called off. Kopke's English agent Dennis Roach blamed the break down Wednesday on the player's German agent, revealing that on three separate occasions personal terms were agreed with Wolfgang Voigt only to be subsequently rejected. Kopke fell out with Marseille after being relegated to the bench for several matches. He was originally expected to arrive at Ibrox on Monday. The German international was wanted by Rangers manager Dick Advocaat to cover the loss for the remainder of this season of Frenchman Lionel Charbonnier, who damaged knee ligaments against Bayer Leverkusen.

Germany's World Cup bid attacked

BONN (AFP) — The manager of German club Bayer Leverkusen has come out against Germany's bid to host the 2006 World Cup. Rainer Calmund told journalists that the German Football Federation should drop its application and instead back a South African bid. "I think it is absolutely unwise that we have pushed ourselves to the front yet again," Calmund was quoted as saying. "You have to ask yourself, how often has Europe staged a World Cup? They have never had one in Africa." World governing body FIFA

will make a final decision in March 2000. Besides Germany and South Africa, the other candidates include England, Brazil, Argentina, Morocco and Nigeria.

Fiorentina UEFA Cup ban criticised

MADRID (AFP) — Fourteen of Europe's major clubs on Tuesday condemned Fiorentina's exclusion from the UEFA Cup after one of their matches was abandoned when a huge firework thrown from the crowd injured an official. AC Milan vice-president Adriano Galliani, a member of a newly-formed association of top teams, said: "The action of a vandal is an act of terrorism. Fiorentina do not deserve this punishment. The result on the pitch must always be maintained. What happens on the pitch is one thing and what happens in the stands is something completely different." Italian side Fiorentina were virtually sure of victory while playing Zurich Grasshopper at home in the second round of the UEFA Cup on November 3 when the firework was thrown onto the pitch. UEFA ruled Grasshopper should be awarded the tie, even though Fiorentina denied their fans were to blame. Galliani was speaking after a meeting of the new association, set up to look after the financial interests of Europe's top clubs. The 14 are Ajax Amsterdam, PSV Eindhoven, Barcelona, Real Madrid, Bayern Munich, Borussia Dortmund, Inter Milan, Juventus Turin, AC Milan, Liverpool, Manchester United, PSG, Marseille and Porto.

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Israeli army evacuates settlers trying to occupy W. Bank hill

KEDUMIM (AFP) — In a campaign launched with the tacit backing of Israel's government, Jewish settlers seized several more hilltops in the West Bank early Wednesday in a bid to prevent the land from falling into Palestinian hands, witnesses said.

Israeli police stepped in to evacuate one group of several dozen men, women and children from three remote hills located more than 10 kilometres from the existing settlement of Kedumim, in the northern West Bank.

Police took away 11 of the settlers and were combing the hills for others, but local Jewish leaders vowed to persist in their bid to expand Kedumim over an additional 150 hectares.

At the same time however, authorities took no immediate action against settlers who set up six mobile homes on a hilltop near the settlement of Halamish in the central West Bank, witnesses said.

It was at least the 11th move by right-wing nationalists to set up new makeshift settlements in the West Bank since the government signed the Wye River peace agreement last

month promising to turn additional West Bank land over to Palestinian rule.

The Israeli pullbacks are expected to begin this weekend and the settlers are rushing to occupy land around their enclaves which they fear could be part of the transfer.

The settlers claimed their actions were officially sanctioned following a statement earlier this week by Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon, who called on Israelis to "run and grab as many hilltops as possible" in the West Bank to keep land from falling into Palestinian hands.

Sharon's declaration appeared to contradict a clause in the Wye River accord barring "unilateral actions" which change the status of the occupied territories.

But the foreign minister, a champion of Jewish settlers, said he was referring only to the extension of settlements within their recognised "planning boundaries" — steps he says are permitted by the agreement.

So far, Israeli authorities have only moved against the settlers from Kedumim, saying their land grab

involved hilltops far outside the existing settlement.

Led by Kedumim's militant mayor, Daniella Weiss, groups of settlers have tried to set up makeshift camps on several of the picturesque hills covering this area located south of the Palestinian-run city of Nablus.

Each day since Monday the settlers have climbed the hills with tents and other equipment, only to be forced down again by police.

On Wednesday the army sent a helicopter to help in the search for settlers who fanned out onto hills over a wide area which includes a number of Arab villages.

"We have already occupied this hill three times and if the army drives us away, we will come back," said Weiss.

She claimed the disputed hilltops lie within Kedumim's permitted boundaries on land owned by Jewish Israelis or the state.

But police said their land grab was illegal.

Israel is expected to begin the withdrawals required under the Wye River peace accord this weekend.



An elderly Palestinian farmer watches as Israeli bulldozers tear into farmland while making a 'bypass' road in the hills outside Ramallah on Wednesday. Under the terms of the Wye peace accord Israel must construct so-called 'bypass' roads to existing Jewish settlements (Reuters photo)

The accord requires Israel to transfer an additional 13 per cent of the West Bank to partial Palestinian control and to withdraw fully

from another 14 per cent of the territory currently under shared rule.

Although the full maps for the withdrawals have

not been published, the pullbacks will reportedly leave several Jewish settlements in the north of the West Bank surrounded by

Palestinian-ruled territory. Weiss claimed that hills her supporters were trying to occupy were slated for transfer to the Palestinians.

Embassy to sue Jordanian employer

(Continued from page 1)

as the Abu Khajil case — last year began implementing a programme to try to regulate the relationship between employers and Sri Lankan domestic workers, which he estimates may number 60,000. However, the ambassador said that most maids enter the country through "agents" — usually registered as business service providers — without the knowledge of Sri Lankan authorities.

This is the second incident involving a Sri Lankan maid in six weeks. In mid-October, a domestic helper was found hanging at her employer's house in Marka. The woman was discovered by passers-by hanging from second floor

window of her employer's home. A note found on the victim state that she committed suicide "because the money her employer paying her was not enough."

Rajalingam said that he believed cases of abuse were minimal, but domestic helpers in Amman recently told the Jordan Times that they were frequent.

"But foreign domestic workers feel defeated by the system when they are victims of abuse," one Sri Lankan told the Jordan Times recently.

"Especially the Sri Lankan girls, who usually tend to come from the countryside and are uneducated. They don't know how to claim their rights in this country, and are unlikely to do so out of fear."

Israel readies withdrawal

(Continued from page 1)

The pullback will involve Israel extending Palestinian civil administration to two per cent of West Bank now under its exclusive rule. At the same time Israel will withdraw its forces fully from seven per cent of the territory now under shared rule.

Following the transfer, the PNA will have full control over 10 per cent of the West Bank and civilian authority over another 19 per cent, where Israel's army will retain security control.

The withdrawal should have taken place Monday under the terms of the Wye accord signed last month in Washington.

But Netanyahu held up the pullback pending ratification

both by his cabinet, which occurred last week after several delays, and by parliament, which overwhelmingly endorsed the agreement late Tuesday.

In addition to the land transfers, Israel is required to free this week 250 Palestinian prisoners, out of 750 to be released during the life of the Wye accord.

Negotiations on the prisoner release hit a snag this week when Israel said it intended to include 100 common criminals in the deal. The Palestinians insist the Wye accord requires the release of persons held for their political actions.

Israel must also this week authorise the opening of an airport in Gaza and a transportation corridor linking the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Inspectors resume work

(Continued from page 1)

British Prime Minister Tony Blair, in an interview published Wednesday by The New York Times, warned: "Next time there won't be any negotiation at all — there will just be action."

U.S. President Bill Clinton on Sunday suspended threats of military action against Iraq, but said extra forces already in the Gulf would remain to strike Baghdad if it ended cooperation with UNSCOM again.

The United States now has 237 military aircraft, 14 warships and 24,000 military personnel in the Gulf and has spent \$6.9 billion in repeated confrontations with Baghdad since the 1991 Gulf war.

In New York, the U.S. charge d'affaires Peter Burleigh shot down Iraqi hopes of a speedy lifting of sanctions imposed for Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"As far as the United States is concerned, we don't expect the comprehensive review to result in the lifting of sanctions," he told reporters on Tuesday. "There's no issue about incremental lifting of sanctions. It's not allowed under the resolution," he said, referring to resolution 687, the main ceasefire resolution adopted in April 1991 after the Gulf war.

But Iraqi Ambassador Nizar Hamdoun said Burleigh was making "an inaccurate reading of Security Council resolutions, or an attempt to rewrite some provisions."

Hamdoun pointed out that resolution 687 "clearly" provides for an easing of imports by Iraq, once Baghdad has complied with the non-disarmament demands.

Paragraph 22 of resolution 687 provides for the lifting of the oil embargo once Iraq has complied fully with disarmament requirements.

Palestinian police to confiscate illegal arms

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Palestinian police said on Wednesday they would start confiscating illegal weapons next week in compliance with a new peace deal with Israel.

The action, required under the land-for-security accord, will be among issues examined by Israel's cabinet on Thursday when it meets to decide whether to carry out a first withdrawal of troops from part of the West Bank.

"We will start next week collecting all illegal weapons in all Palestinian governorates. We will be implementing the Palestinian law," Palestinian police chief, Ghazi Al Jabali, told Reuters.

He said the law bans the purchase, import, manufacture and unlicensed sale of weapons and imposes a maximum three-year jail term and maximum fine of around \$7,500 on violators.

In a further indication that the peace deal was on track after several delays and belittling rhetoric, Israeli Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon and senior Palestinian negotiator Mahmoud Abbas met in Jerusalem.

Sharon said the talks opened negotiations on a final peace settlement, though Abbas earlier told Reuters the sides would simply discuss setting a date for those discussions.

The so-called final status talks cover the most difficult issues dividing Israel and the Palestinians — Jerusalem, borders, the fate of Palestinian refugees, Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, and water rights.

"It's not an easy issue as you can understand, the two nations have been fighting now for over 100 years," Sharon said.

The Wye River interim deal signed in Washington last month obliges Israel to cede another 13 per cent of the West Bank in three phases over 12 weeks, in return for Palestinian steps against anti-Israeli activists and other political moves.

"If the cabinet is satisfied that the Palestinians have complied with their requirement in the first phases, then there will be a withdrawal," said David Bar Ilan, a senior adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said President Yasser Arafat would issue a decree on Thursday to implement the illegal weapons law and on Saturday another decree prohibiting incitement to violence.

Israel is obliged in the first phase to cede another two per cent of the West Bank to partial Palestinian control and

pull out of another 7.1 per cent that is now under joint control.

Bar Ilan said Israel would also allow the opening of a Palestinian airport in Gaza and release 250 Palestinian prisoners in the first phase of the deal, which was ratified by Israel's parliament on Tuesday.

Erekat said Israel had pledged to begin its pullback, open the airport and free a first batch of prisoners on Friday.

Problems remain over the prisoners, with Israel saying most will be common criminals while Palestinians insist on the release of political detainees.

Iraqi delegation arrives in Tehran for PoW talks

TEHRAN (AFP) — An Iraqi delegation is in Tehran for talks with Iranian officials on the fate of prisoners of the 1980-1988 war between the two neighbours, a newspaper reported Wednesday.

The talks began Sunday between General Abdullah Najafi, the head of Iran's PoW commission and his Iraqi counterpart Fahmi Al Qeisi, the government daily Iran said.

The paper, citing commission spokesman Brigadier General Mohammad Balar, said the talks were aimed at "clearing up the situation of the two countries PoWs as soon as possible."

The issue of exchanging prisoners of war and recovering soldiers' remains has been

a key obstacle to normalisation of ties between the two countries, which have yet to sign a peace treaty 10 years after the end of their war.

Baghdad claims it has released all Iranian PoWs, but Tehran says it has evidence proving many prisoners are still unaccounted for.

Iraq in return charges that Iran still holds around 20,000 Iraqis, a claim Tehran has neither confirmed nor denied.

Tehran and Baghdad have shown a greater desire to resolve the issue since December and they have held periodic meetings at their common border.

In April, the International Red Cross supervised an exchange in which 5,584 Iraqis

and 319 Iranians were released. It was the first major exchange of prisoners since 1990, when each side freed around 40,000 captives from the other country.

Najafi said in April that the problem of the PoWs will be resolved by the end of the current Iranian year on March 21.

The latest talks come ahead of visits to Iraq in the near future by Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi and Vice President Hassan Habibi.

Habibi will be the highest-ranking Iranian official to visit Iraq since the end of the war. Iranian Commerce Minister Mohammad Shariatmadari recently travelled to Iraq, where he participated in an international trade fair.

U.N. Assembly backs Bethlehem 2000 project

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The Israeli-Palestinian conflict intruded on Wednesday when the General Assembly adopted a resolution supporting the Palestinian Authority's Bethlehem 2000 project to mark the new millennium with events focusing on the birthplace of Jesus.

The celebrations, due to begin at Christmas 1999 and conclude at Easter 2001, involve religious and cultural events as well as economic development and tourism. The organisers expect some 2 million visitors.

The resolution was introduced by ambassador Ibra Ka of Senegal, chairman of the U.N. committee on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and was sponsored by 42 delegations. It was adopted by consensus.

The resolution said "the Palestinian city of Bethlehem is the birthplace of Jesus Christ and one of the most historic and significant sites on earth."

It welcomed the "impending arrival of this global, historic celebration... and the onset of the third millennium as a symbol of the shared hope for peace among all peoples of the world." The resolution also expressed the need for "immediate change in the situation on the ground in the vicinity of Bethlehem, especially with regard to ensuring freedom of

movement" — a reference to checkpoints between Israel and Palestinian self-rule areas, including Bethlehem.

It also expressed hope for "rapid progress in the Middle East peace process and the achievement of the final settlement between the Palestinian and Israeli sides within the agreed time." This was an allusion to a May 4, 1999 target date for the conclusion of final status talks between the two sides.

The Palestinian U.N. observer, Nasser Al Kidwa, said Bethlehem, "like all other Palestinian cities that have suffered under the long and harsh years of occupation," suffered damage and deterioration to its infrastructure.

Palestinians therefore needed assistance from the international community, he said.

The estimated total cost of the Bethlehem 2000 project was \$336 million, with contributions already received from various countries, U.N. agencies and other bodies, he added. Israeli Ambassador Dore Gold said his country embraced the opportunity to host a gathering of Christian pilgrims "marking 2000 years since the birth of Jesus in the ancient land then known as Judea" and had launched a variety of projects to make the event as meaningful as possible.

Turkey-Italy row escalates

(Continued from page 1)

D'Alema earlier told the Turkish ambassador that Italy would stick to the letter of its extradition law and hoped the case would not harm ties between the two countries.

The United States on Wednesday expressed support for Turkey's request for extradition from its NATO ally Italy.

"We believe he should be extradited and brought to justice. And we hope a way will be

found to extradite him to Turkey, consistent with international and Italian law," State Department spokesman James Rubin said.

The Turkish prime minister, facing the imminent collapse of his government, said Turkey would never negotiate with Ocalan's "bloody-handed" PKK.

The thick-set, middle-aged guerrilla leader has been backed by protesters by PKK sympathisers in the Italian cap-

ital.

"I ask Italy to mediate between us and Turkey for a political solution to the Kurdish issue... We are ready for dialogue with Turkey, Europe and the United States," he was quoted as saying in the Italian daily La Repubblica.

"I can't believe Italy could be so cowardly as to hand me over to Turkey or Germany," he added.

Yilmaz has called on the two million Turks living in Europe

to press for Ocalan's extradition. Ocalan is on trial in absentia in Turkey for treason and is also wanted in Germany for attacks on Turkish targets there.

The conflict between the PKK and Turkish security forces in the rugged southeast of Turkey has cost over 29,000 lives.

Italy's constitution is likely to prevent extradition because Turkish law technically permits the death sentence.

Turkish cabinet attempts to scrap capital punishment specifically to ensure a trial for the rebel chief have been ham-

pered by a general government crisis in Turkey. Yilmaz seems likely to lose what amounts to a confidence vote next week.

Justice Minister Hasan Denizkurdu said extradition was far from certain even if Ankara abolished the death penalty. "Even if the death sentence is scrapped, the extradition is not an automatic process," Anatolian news agency quoted him as saying.

The PKK regards Italy, home to many Kurdish refugees, as the European country best disposed towards it. The case has sent ripples across Europe.

Girl lost report card in meeting with president

TAHLEQUAH (AP) — If teachers don't believe that dogs eat homework, imagine their reaction to Desiree Wilson's line: The president took my report card. Desiree and her mother were at an airport in Arkansas when the president began shaking hands. Desiree asked if he would sign her grade card. The president smiled and said he would. But when Desiree handed the card to a Secret Service agent, Clinton moved on. An agent assured Desiree that the card would be mailed to her if found. She hasn't seen it since.

Cookbook for dogs

KANSAS CITY (R) — It's a repeat for Rover: "Scottie Scones," "Corgi Crumpets," "German Shepherd's Pie," "Labrador Lasagna" — more than 50 home-made, all natural recipes in the "Three Dog Bakery Cookbook," Andrews McMeel Publishing said the owners of a Kansas City take-out food shop for dogs — called the Three Dog Bakery — have come up with a book compiling their favourite selections. They run from "yappetizers" like "Cheese Please Hound Rounds" and "Poochie Pleasins Pretzels" to main courses featuring turkey burgers, pizza and meat loaf, as well as baked goods and deserts.

Chicken barbecue advert withdrawn

SYDNEY (AFP) — A television commercial depicting a woman's head transposed onto the body of a chicken being roasted on a barbecue tended by a man was withdrawn Wednesday after complaints from viewers. As the woman calls out for his help, the lid of the barbecue slams shut. The Advertising Standards Board ruled that the Barbecues Galore advert vilified women and breached the industry's code of ethics. Viewers complained it used humour to legitimise violence against women and reinforced sexism, the board said.

Pets banned from Paris street

PARIS (R) — Paris will lose a little of its charm on Dec. 1 when the pet shops lining the Right Bank's Quai de la Megisserie will be required to move their animals indoors. "This form of display, denounced by animal protection associations, has been progressively abandoned by most professionals in this sector," a police statement said. The colourful pet shops in central Paris have been a magnet for shoppers and tourists. Crowds flock to the area to gawk at the puppies and kittens as well as more exotic animals like giant rabbits, goats, rare breeds of chickens, snakes and skunks.

Cigarette flavour in smokers' breast milk: Study

BOSTON (R) — Smoking cigarettes can rapidly affect the taste and smell of breast milk, according to two Philadelphia scientists. A panel of smell experts "were more likely to identify samples collected from the women 30 minutes to one hour after smoking as smelling 'stronger' or 'more like cigarettes' than the other samples," concluded Julie Mennella and Gary Beauchamp of the Monell Chemical Senses Centre. "These findings raise the possibility that in addition to the effects of nicotine on the developing brain, early experiences with the flavour of tobacco in breast milk influence the likelihood that exposed children will find these flavours appealing later in life," they said.

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